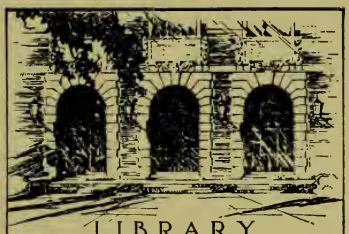

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WILD ROSE.

A Romance.

BY

JOHN HILL.

'Sah ein Knab' ein Röslein stehn,
Röslein auf der Heiden,
War so jung und morgenschön,
Lief er schnell es nahzusehen,
Sah's mit vielen Freuden
Röslein, Röslein, Röslein roth
Röslein auf der Heiden.'
J. W. v. GOETHE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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1882.

WILD ROSE.

CHAPTER I.

JACK IS FOREWARNED.

Jack got up rather late this Monday morning, and breakfasted, as he often did, alone in that den which was to him library, smoking-room and studio. For, freed from the fetters of examinations, he now spent his time in painting, a pursuit to which he was devoted, and worked really hard at, and it had the result of filling his sanctum with a delightfully mixed atmosphere of lead, linseed and tobacco, which the pure morning air pouring in at the window did its best to disperse.

He did not give trouble to the household to prepare him a meal. He made his own coffee, and boiled his own egg over a spirit-lamp, long Oxbridge experience having taught him to forage for and feed himself, independently of servants' assistance.

His room was rather characteristic of him. It contained quantities of sketches, fencing apparatus, a writing-table with a large pewter inkstand, and luxurious thick, stiff paper. Jack was fastidious in writing-paper, if not in inkstands. Correspondents saw the former and not the latter. On the end of the writing-table lay his painting materials, in that state of stickiness and mess, which appears to be a necessary condition to the true and orthodox pursuit of art. Near stood an easel, with an elaborate portrait of a china jar and a sword, which rather oddly associated group he was doing for practice in execution, landscape being really his strong point. A book-case stood

on one side of the room, lightly if miscellaneously filled. Works on medicine and science and philosophy elbowed yellow and grey French works. Butler's 'Analogy' stood between 'Don Juan' and a work on chemistry. His favourite poets were, however, all together. He had learned to read German and French well, though he had had very little opportunity of speaking either.

Two or three very comfortable easy-chairs, ancient indeed, and extracted from lumber and auction rooms, surrounded the fire. The mantelpiece was covered with china jars, ash-trays, and pipes of all kinds, from the clay, 'black but comely,' to the meerschaum, in all its splendour and dignity of amber and velvet.

The general spirit of the room was 'comfort amid confusion;' Mrs. Miller having in vain tried to persuade him to make it more tidy, and not to put his coats where

antimacassars should be, while he painted in his shirtsleeves, with a short clay pipe in the corner of his mouth, and a copy of Alfred de Musset on the table. She, who was tidiness itself, frequently offered to do it for him, and was rebuffed with gentle scorn.

Jack had told Max where to find him; but had an idea that he would find sufficient occupation downstairs. As a matter of fact, immediately after breakfast the Professor gave Laurence a cigar and inveigled him out to have a turn on the lawn, where he (the Professor) kept up a long but by no means wearisome discussion on everything in general and nothing in particular, which no one could do better than he, with a cigar and an intelligent and appreciative listener.

Mrs. Miller busied herself in the mysteries of household affairs, as expressed by several large and flexible books with per-

pendicular lines on the right-hand sides of the pages.

Hel appeared eventually on the lawn to the rescue of Laurence, and took him to look at roses, and then reminded him of his promise to translate German songs. He said :

'I shall be too happy to do anything to encourage you to reading our native songs, but you must not form your opinion of them — in fact, I know you will not — from my halting English prose.'

'Can't you put them into English verse, if you try?' said Hel, with a smile.

'No ; no one can—and no one ought. Half the art in them consists in the form in which certain truths are expressed, and that in a verse translation is lost. The more literal it is, the better idea the translation gives of the original. Goethe and Heine have been done into English verse only too much.'

'If that's the case, "I'm sorry I spoke," as the parrot said. But it reminds me that you have promised me something else too, which I am not going to let you forget.'

'And that is——'

'To let me see your own poetry.'

Max picked some leaves of lemon-verbena and broke it up. 'If you will allow me, I will send for a copy, and shall be happy if you will accept it. I don't know whether you will like it, though.'

'Thanks. And now, if you think you have destroyed enough of that plant, we will go to Jack's room and do some German. He has the books; I asked him last night.'

'Miller asked me to visit his room, but omitted to tell me where it was; so I must ask you to guide me.'

'Just like him! Never mind, come with me,' replied Hel, gathering up her

train at the foot of the stairs. And they invaded Jack's studio.

'Hullo. What do you two "melancholy, mild-eyed lotos-eaters" want here?'

'I like your welcome, Jack. Do you generally treat each other like this at Oxbridge, Mr. Laurence?'

'As a rule. You see, we have no immediate presence of sisters to correct our departures from the tracks of civilized behaviour.'

'Fortunately,' said Jack.

'I am not in a position to give an opinion,' replied Max.

'Have you no sisters?' asked Hel.

'Not one.'

'Ah, I thought so, somehow!'

'Happy man!' observed Jack musingly; then added, 'Well, again I ask whether a desire to study the progress of a modern art, or idle curiosity, or the heat of the

weather, have brought me this exceedingly welcome visit?'

'We want to read some Goethe.'

'Oh! All right, if it keeps you quiet. You'll find the works of the great heathen somewhere there. Take a pipe, Max? If people come here—young persons, I mean, of the other sex—they mustn't mind tobacco.'

'You can smoke if you like, Mr. Laurence. I am quite accustomed to it here, and in fact rather like it.'

So Max made himself a cigarette, and with Hel's assistance, searched among Jack's collection till he found Goethe's shorter songs, in one volume. He then plunged into 'Dichter lieben nicht zu schweigen,' translating into good, expressive English, and explaining away, in his low, pleasant voice, all about Goethe's youth, and life, and meaning, as it appeared to him, in the words of a sym-

pathetic mind. On arriving at the line, 'Niemand beichtet gern in Prosa,' he said: 'There! that explains all the motive for all true poetry at once.'

'Well,' said Hel, 'you haven't translated it.'

'It means "No one likes to make confessions in prose." Many people, of course, cannot make them otherwise, and consequently make none, and thus a great deal of interesting human history is lost. Poetry really is only a, to the writer, peculiarly tempting, and occasionally to the reader, peculiarly agreeable form of telling "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."'

'Kiss the book,' remarked Jack from his easel. 'I say, Max, that last sentence of yours, which I had the disadvantage to overhear, was the most awfully involved and Teutonically expressed one I've heard for some time.'

'It is the effect of thinking in German.'

'I understood it,' said Hel.

'Well, it so far answers its purpose, then.'

So they spent the whole morning, Max becoming more and more of a modern Gamaliel to Hel, though, of course, not as far as their relative physical attitudes were concerned. Jack began rather to tire of it, and said eventually:

'You haven't tried my piano, Max. Sing us something.'

'Oh yes—do,' said Hel. 'Sing something of Goethe's now, and that will make the whole thing complete.'

Jack possessed a small piano, which he had picked up cheap at a sale. Max made another cigarette and obeyed, and sang 'Ich hab' mein Sach' auf nichts gestellt!' He had a very fine tenor voice, and brought some very good sounds out of the poor little much-strummed piano. Of course,

he had to translate the song afterwards. He then sang 'Ein Veilchen auf der Wiese stand,' and invited Hel to sing. She refused to sing anything German in his presence, but said :

'Do you know any of our own ballads ?'

'English ones ? A few.'

'No ; by "our own" I mean Scotch ones. I fancy you will find them more unintelligible than I do your German ones.'

'Give me the opportunity of judging.'

So Hel sang 'John Anderson, my Jo, John,' which ranks among the most touching productions of that master of pathos, its author. Laurence understood it better than Hel expected, and demanded another Scotch ballad. She gave 'Ye Banks and Braes of Bonnie Doon.' Jack exclaimed :

'You needn't be so beastly pathetic all of a sudden, Hel. You know, Max, that

is a sort of male version of Schiller's "Mädchen's Klage." Just let me get at that piano. I'll give you a Scotch song that your sympathetic soul will rejoice in.'

And Jack turned Hel off the stool, and took her place, and sang with much vigour and enthusiasm:

'"Green grow the rashes, O!
Green grow the rashes, O!
The sweetest hours that e'er I spent,
I spent among the lasses, O!

'"There's nought but care on every han,'
In every hour that passes, O!
What signifies the life o' man,
An' twerena for the lasses, O!"'

Laurence's eyes lighted.

'Go on!' said he. 'There is a magnificent human, earthly ring about that, extraordinary as the dialect is.'

Jack went on:

'"For ye sae douse, ye sneer at this,
Ye're nought but senseless asses, O!
The wisest man the warl' e'er saw
He dearly loved the lasses, O!"'

'I think that's rather profane, isn't it?' said Hel.

'Very likely,' replied Jack; 'but it is perfectly true, unless, indeed, you like to take exception at the word "wisest" as applied to Solomon.'

Here the luncheon-bell rang, and Jack rushed to remove the inevitable traces of art from his hands and to put on a coat, and Max followed Hel downstairs.

The afternoon was spent by Max and Jack in having a vigorous duel with foils and masks in a secluded glade among the firs, with Hel for umpire. After this the two former took baths, and sat opposite each other in the 'studio,' in *dishabille*, in arm-chairs, smoking pipes in a silence which Laurence was the first to break.

'What a charming home you have, Miller!'

''Tisn't a bad place.'

'You needn't speak apologetically, as if you had made it all that it is.'

'Don't be beastly superior, and try to sit upon one in your language.'

'What time is dinner?'

'Are you hungry?'

'Not particularly. I only ask for information.'

'Seven. That little girl is coming.'

'What little girl? Oh, the one that was in church. Well, I suppose you will go through your usual cycle of folly with her, as with the others? "In Spanien tausend und drei!" as Leporello remarks.'

'Only too happy to commit any amount of folly at her instigation and with her assistance.'

'Didn't know you were so susceptible.'

'Didn't know I was either, but it appears I am; and if you make love to that girl, fair sir, I'll assassinate you.'

'Oh, don't be afraid. I've been there

before. I don't like girls with expressions like that. I have expressed my opinion on her already, and I stick to it. I recommend you seriously to go away to Paris at once, rather than get in love with that girl. She will destroy all your peace :

> ' "Doch schlecht bekommen dir am Ende,
> Die wild Brunetten—Sonnen—brände." '

'You are a pleasant prophet. And no one asked your advice.'

'And experience might have taught me that it was quite futile to give it. When you have an impulse of this kind, I know you will act on it, regardless of the consequences.'

'Well, I will. There! Take another pipe?'

'No, thank you.'

'Then don't.'

'John Miller, B.A., I cannot help thinking that repartee is *not* your strong point.'

'Do you know it is almost time we got clothed and into our right minds and our white ties?'

'By all means. I suppose you are going to spend the next three quarters of an hour in adorning yourself for the fray. Nothing like making a good impression at starting. Can I lend you a "Joe Miller" to get up intelligent conversation from, interspersed with instructive anecdote?'

'I believe Jack Miller will be sufficient for one evening.'

'Oh, pray go and dress.'

CHAPTER II.

'Est très-pâle. Elle arrive de France,
Et regrette le sol qu'elle vient de quitter.
On dit qu'elle a seize ans. Elle est Américaine.'

A. DE MUSSET.

MONDAY evening was still, cloudless, and the colour of dusky gold, deepening into dull, dark coppery haze. The air was heavy and hot, heralding some sudden change in the weather. Even the birds were silent. The whole land lay under a sleepy sunlit mist, making the near look far, and the far infinitely unattainable. Jack and Max Laurence, in evening-dress, walked up and down the old stone terrace, watching the sky and waiting for their

guests. The latter was serene and silent, listening to the eager, low-voiced raillery of the former, who seemed excited and conversational. They were joined by Hel, in a closely clinging costume of white, with a pointed opening at the neck, who presented them with two small bouquets of lily-of-the-valley for the button-hole, and told them to go in, as Mr. Exeter had arrived.

Jack said: 'He had better come out here, if he wants us. I am not going to lose this sky for him. I must get some cadmium yellow to-morrow. Still, we will go in. Exeter is sure to begin speculating on the weather of the future—a sort of conversation which spoils the best of sunsets.'

In the drawing-room, Mr. Exeter, in his usual costume, which for some mystic and sacred reason he preferred to evening-dress, was talking about the barometer, at

such momentary intervals as the Professor gave him in which to make his voice heard. Professor Miller was discoursing on dinners in the abstract, and regretting the absence of Apemantus from the present concrete specimen. Max began to make observations to Hel in his low confidential voice about the beauty of yellow irises in the evening light. Jack was standing in the open glass door which led on to the terrace, still watching the sky, when the announcement of Mrs. Frankland and Miss Taylor caused him to quickly go through the simple manœuvre known as 'right about wheel!'

Mrs. Frankland looked tall, fragile, and indefinitely elegant, as usual. Rosa came in with the evening glow on her face, and with white blossoms of syringa in her hair, whose heavy and faint delicious odour was immediately apparent throughout the room. She was in black, as usual, in a dress that

was closed up to the neck, and, prompted probably by a sentiment of 'grown-up'-ness, had twisted her curly hair into a small black knob at the back of her neck; a black fan hung from her waist by a silver chain, and a little silver snake clung round each wrist. Jack was duly presented. Rosa said to him:

'I'm sorry if we are very late, because it's my fault. My gloves never will button under a quarter of an hour; they are not quite through yet.'

'You are not late,' replied Jack. He would of course have sworn that it was their usual dinner-time, or that the clock was wrong, if it had been 10 p.m.; it was, however, only 7.15.

Dinner was announced, and the Professor headed a procession with Mrs. Frankland, followed by Jack and Rosa, Max and Hel, Mr. Exeter and Mrs. Miller in any order.

Professor Miller's dining-room was dark-coloured and cool-looking, and the side-board was distinguished by the absence of the waggon-load of ill-worked silver ornamental ware which it is usually the pride of a British family to display, and supported instead merely what was likely to be useful in the course of the repast. On the walls there were no pictures of ancestors with vaguely defiant expressions, in ruffs and pointed beards with deformed shoulders, or in scarlet coats, full wigs and swelled faces. (It is difficult to account for the universal eighteenth tendency to swelled face; it may be due to the Hanoverian fashion of eating.)

There were also no 'dining-room' pictures, medleys of deceased birds, fish, and rabbits reclining among the contents apparently of a dustbin, onions, oyster-shells miscellaneous pieces of cloth, halves of fruit, sheltered by curtains pendent from

the nearest cloud, and set off by a château and a minute 'Greek' temple à la Claude, and a thunderstorm in the distance. Professor Miller used to say he had some respect for his ancestors, and consequently could not allow their portraits to appear.

His dinners were known to the neighbourhood to be exceedingly good, and he usually amused and entertained his guests very successfully, and this occasion was no exception to the rule. But the conversation was intermittent, and very much divided into scraps, and, with all respect to the persons that carried it on, was of very ephemeral interest.

Jack studied Rosa, and gradually got acquainted to some extent with her style of conversation, and tried to find what were her sympathies and ideas of amusement, in order to adapt his own conversation to them. He was rather good at

adapting himself to various girls' tastes, having plenty of intelligence and tact both in his head and in his speech, and generally knew whether to adopt the calm and serious, the audaciously flippant, or the artistic style. He drifted into a mixture of the two latter with Rosa, who had a sense of humour and a great love of nature; and by the time dinner was over, had undertaken to show her the garden, and prophesied the kind of sky which would be a background to the fir-grove.

Professor Miller, unless he had some subject of importance to discuss, always brought his male guests out of the dining-room very soon after the departure of the ladies, holding the orthodox British custom of sitting over wine as barbarous, and only fitted for the men of an obsolete mind and generation. The young men who were his guests were deeply grateful for the innovation. It is possible that the ladies were

too, though that is a matter open to speculation.

As he never had matters of importance to discuss with the Rector, they all proceeded on this occasion through the drawing-room on to the terrace, where chairs and small tables, covered with the apparatus for the production and circulation of coffee, had been placed by the servants.

The evening was warm and calm as ever. Jack brought Rosa coffee, and sat on a chair beside her, and pointed out that the colourless light and haze behind the darkly-defined fir-twigs and peaks was what he had been endeavouring to describe at dinner.

'Do you paint?' asked Rosa.

'After a fashion. I am very fond of employing in that way the time in which I ought to be studying the diseases of the human body.'

'Are you studying medicine?'

'I used to think so. I have a vivid impression that the fine arts and the sunsets and the trees have entered into a conspiracy to drive the small amount of medical knowledge I have possessed out of my head.'

'You were at Oxbridge, weren't you?'

'Yes. How do you know?'

'I discovered it yesterday. You also spent your time there mostly in larking and having good times, didn't you?'

''Pon my word, you have a pretty accurate notion of me, wherever you got it. Do I commit an indiscretion in asking the source of your information?'

'Not at all. I heard this from Mr. Radford, whose front name, I believe, is Arthur, who called with his mother on us to-day.'

'Indeed. Mr. Arthur Radford was very confiding. May I ask how such a

peculiarly interesting topic of conversation arose ?'

Rosa looked at her feet. So did Jack. They were clothed in very small, pointed black slippers and black silk stockings.

'I don't know exactly. I believe Mrs. Radford started it,' said this young person, calmly oblivious, if not utterly ignorant, of the awful fate of Sapphira.

'Then she must excuse my making remarks about her. She is a person whom I have an utter and uncontrollable loathing for, which is, I am afraid, very often too apparent when I am talking to her. It's just like her to go yarning to you about me, a person you had never seen, and could take no possible interest in.'

Diplomatic Jack!

'But I have seen you, and did——'

'Did what ?'

'Did see you in church last Sunday. Didn't you see me ?'

'Rather. Do you often go to church?'

'No. As seldom as possible. I hate it. Mrs. Frankland persuades me to go with her sometimes, but I believe she only does it because she knows you English always do it, and think anyone not respectable who don't.'

'Then I must ask you to except me from "you English," for I neither go habitually to church, nor do I think people not respectable who don't. I call my father respectable, for example, and would like to hear Mrs. Radford or any other old cat in Winterdale say he wasn't—though I've no doubt they do, all the same. But I am afraid there is some mysterious repulsion between me and ordinary "respectable" people. Of course, the Pro. isn't ordinary people, and doesn't come into the argument.'

'I never was brought up to any religion.'

'Ah, I congratulate you. I was. That accounts partially for my present dislike to it.'

'I don't think much about those things. I get frightened sometimes at night if I have a headache and a sore throat, as I often do, and suppose I'll have to go to Hell some day, and wonder if people have sore throats there. I think there ought to be some middle place, where people like me, who aren't good enough for the one place and not quite bad enough—yet—for the other, might go. On the whole, I try to think about it as little as possible.'

Jack writhed with wrath. That this delightful young child of earth, with her sensuous little smile and evident delight in the good tastes and sights and sounds of this life, should ever torment herself with ideas of a Judaic Gehenna improved upon by mediæval Christians!

'Who can have had the cruelty to put such ideas into your head? Don't worry your mind about those ghastly nightmare notions. They are only the exhalations of diseased minds.'

'What do you believe in?' asked Rosa, glancing at him curiously.

'I might answer that in one word. If I had lived nineteen or twenty centuries ago I should have made rather a fine pagan, I imagine, and believed in the gods that are "cruel as love or life and lovely as death," and enjoyed life like the rest of them when the world was young. As it is, I endeavour to enjoy life as much as my limited opportunities will permit, and worship Eros, Aphrodite, and Persephone retrospectively and metaphorically now that the world is old. For belief—I believe in myself!'

Rosa recognised the names from her frequent visits to galleries of sculpture, and from the rather patchy and faintly recol-

lected teachings of Paul Félix, and knew they referred to something mysterious, beautiful, ancient and lost.

'Will you take another cup of coffee?' added Jack, descending suddenly into the nineteenth century.

'No, thank you.'

'Would you like to walk about a little? I see my sister and Laurence have started that amusement.'

'Yes, I should. What a jolly place you seem to have!'

When Jack had placed a few shrubs between himself and the house, he said:

'Would you allow me to smoke a cigarette?'

'Why, of course! Why didn't you begin before? Would you be shocked if I asked you to give me one?'

'Not in the least. Can you make them?'

'Rather! Give me some paper, but

don't let them see me, you know. Mrs. Frankland don't like me to do it before people. Let's go through those fir-trees and look at the sky.'

So they went and kindled cigarettes amid the kindly darkness of the firs.

'Now tell me something about your student life,' said Rosa.

'Well, I have done very little work. I have read a good deal of poetry, several novels, smoked a good deal of tobacco, drunk a good deal of beer, and loitered about in boats, and occasionally gone to lectures. I have made one or two good friends, of whom that man Laurence you met to-night is one. Good-looking fellow, isn't he?'

'Yes. I suppose you and he have very nice times when you are together by yourselves?'

'Well, I believe we do,' replied Jack, with a modest smile.

'Do you have nice gardens, and dances, and theatres, and all that at Oxbridge?'

'Shades of Vice-Chancellors and Proctors shudder!' thought he. What he said was:

'Theatres are not exactly our strong point. We have very charming gardens and scenery generally, and a river which, when it does not smell, is very pleasant to go upon, and a great resort. Dancing we do not do much of. Where did you get these ideas of University life? Not from Arthur Radford, I suppose?'

'Oh, bother Arthur Radford! No; you will perhaps be surprised to hear that I was born in the Quartier Latin, in Paris, and spent my early years—and I haven't got to very late years yet—among the students and artists there. I love the place awfully.'

And visions of an old studio, and Félix's tawny mane and cigarette, and Ivor

Taylor's blue cheeks and sturdy form, passed rather sadly before her mental eyes.

'Oh, really? Why, I am going there.'

'Fancy! What for? To study medicine?'

'Well, yes—or to paint. See what turns up. Let me see, your father is there now, isn't he?'

'Dr. Taylor? Yes; you'll have to know him. Look here,' continued Rosa, 'do you think you can keep a secret if I tell you one?'

'Of course. Tortures shan't drag it from me.'

'And you won't go and confide it all to your friend Laurence over a pipe to-night?'

'No.'

'I don't know why I should tell you at all, but you seem a sort of fellow I don't mind telling things to.'

Here they reached the gate, which Rosa sat on, and, taking a suck at her cigarette and a glance at the sky, continued :

'Well, Dr. Taylor isn't my father at all. We'll call it guardian, if you like. I was picked up on a bridge in Paris in the middle of the night by—by an artist called Paul Félix, who was a great friend of Dr. Taylor's, and these two brought me up—if I ever was "brought up"—till Dr. Taylor said he couldn't keep me any longer, and that I was getting too old and so on, and must be handed over to his sister, Mrs. Frankland, who had no children, and was then in Paris, and who has been very good to me all the time. Of course, I thought it dreadful nonsense, though it occurred to me afterwards that Dr. Taylor was right enough—propriety and all that, you know.'

'I do know,' said Jack. 'Well?'

'So,' continued Rosa, 'I'm an orphan, or a waif, or flotsam, or whatever you like to call it.'

Jack was deeply interested, and inquired, after a few moments' silence :

'How did you get your name ?'

'Paul baptised me with champagne, at least, so he told me, and called me Rosa —*La Rose, fille du beau quartier.*' Here Rosa looked up with some pride in her eyes, and emitted a defiant whiff of smoke from her small Greek nose. Then a sadder look came into her brown eyes, as she went on. 'Paul died in the war. Dr. Taylor then looked after me for a time, and thought I'd better have his name when I went over to England with his sister. He said he expected surnames would be required more over here. They told me I mustn't be confiding my story to all sorts of people— and I'm sure I don't want to. It wouldn't interest many, and I dare say it hasn't you.'

'I hope I don't come under the category of all sorts of people?'

'Well, I don't on the whole think you do, or I wouldn't have told you. But then my people might have a different opinion.'

'True. However, please understand that I am interested, very much so, and let me call your attention to the rapid ebb of life in your cigarette.'

Rosa revived it, and then said: 'So you are going to Paris too? I guess you'll like it—you seem rather likely to get along with the sort of men you will know there. You are the second Englishman I have got to know—and you are not a bit like the first,' she added, slightly inapropos.

'And he was ——?'

'Mr. Arthur Radford.'

'Good Lord! Let's change the subject. I believe there is going to be a thunderstorm.'

'Oh, I hope so! I like them awfully. Let's stay and watch it—unless you'd rather go in?'

'I am not in any hurry; let us watch it, by all means, on the condition that you undertake not to catch cold while under my charge.'

'Oh, I have a permanent sort of cold, comfortably out of the way, down in my chest somewhere; as long as it doesn't get into my head, I don't mind. Say, come and call on us—of course you will do that, and I will sing you a Parisian student's song.' Jack opened his eyes, and said he would be sure to come.

'Well, but come really. I'm not given to saying things I don't mean, out of civility, and when you say you'll come, I expect you to do it. Will you come to-morrow?'

'All right. When?'

'Let me see—come in the evening, after

dinner, and we can look at some more sky too.'

'And hire another thunderstorm to amuse us,' said Jack, laughing, as a great crash pealed over their heads.

'Bring me some pictures of yours to look at, will you? If it's not too much trouble, I mean—I like pictures very much.'

'You must have seen a great many. I'm afraid you will be awfully critical. However, that will do me good.' The conversation was now punctuated by thunderclaps, and flary streaks of lightning.

'And it is the first of May, Walpurgisnacht,' said a voice, close to them, and Max and Hel appeared from the dark path amid the trees like black and white visions.

'Hullo,' said Jack; 'what in the world are you doing here?'

'Looking for you,' replied Hel calmly. 'You must bring Miss Taylor in. There will be a heavy shower directly.'

'Well, that contingency had occurred to my feeble intellect too,' replied Jack, 'strange as it may sound, and I was just going to propose that we should not wait for the melancholy and moistening after-piece that follows these exciting exhibitions.' So he helped Rosa off the gate, and the four went together away, and came into the drawing-room, blinking as their expanded pupils caught the blaze of lamp and candle, just when the first drops of rain began to fall.

'Was just wondering where in the world you were, Rosie!' observed Mrs. Frankland, rather reprovingly.

'Under very good protection, and with medical assistance at hand,' replied Jack with a smile. He took Rosa to a sofa, and left her for a moment to say to Max—'I say, come and breakfast upstairs with me to-morrow—any time you like.'—'Very good.' He then returned to Rosa, who asked in a low confidential voice:

'Say, what is your front name?'

'I am usually known as Jack.'

'I like that rather. I shall call you by it, some day soon, if you will let me.'

'Of course. May I ask when I may reciprocate, and call you by your wine-inaugurated title of Rosa?'

'When you have done a nice small picture of a sunset behind those fir-trees, and given it to me. Only you mustn't do it when people are listening. Mrs. Radford, for instance.'

'We seem to be unable to talk for five minutes without an intrusion of some member of the Radford family into the conversation. I believe they will shorten my life. By the way, have you seen the General?'

'No; what General?'

'The head of the Radford family. He is a small Irishman, with a bad temper, a scarlet face, and a white moustache,

and endeavours to be funny persistently, and gets sat upon by his wife on each occasion. She calls him "my dear," and the result is temporarily withering. Our neighbours here generally are rather a hopeless lot. Look at old Exeter, for example.'

'He came and called on us. He is very curious indeed. I don't think he is at all like a French priest—he looks cleaner, and wears a beard—but he is nearly as silly to talk to. He asked me if I had been confirmed. I hadn't the wildest idea what he meant, and said "No, not that I know of." He looked rather amazed——'

'I can imagine it,' said Jack, laughing.

'—And asked me if I would not like to be. I said I didn't know—did it hurt? I said that last on purpose, because he looked so scared,' added Rosa, with a

wicked smile in the direction of the topic of her observations, who was discoursing Swiss scenery with Mrs. Frankland.

Jack and Rosa chattered in this edifying manner the whole evening, while Max did his duty manfully to amuse everyone, and sang German songs to his own accompaniment, with his hair thrown back, and the sparkle of the Professor's Moselle wine in his face, until the room partook of his enthusiasm, and the Professor made an attempt to join in the chorus of 'Krambambuli,' which was instantly suppressed by Hel. Even Mr. Exeter demanded, in a rich, solemn voice, the subject of the song.

'It is slightly allegorical,' explained Laurence, with a laugh in his dark eyes, 'and describes the only true method for turning grief into gladness. Is it not so, Herr Professor? You have sung it in Heidelberg, I know.'

'I think you have caught the meaning of the author,' replied the Professor gravely, 'carefully veiled, as you have said it is, in the mists of parable. It is true, I have sung it once upon a time, and I fancy I could sing it now, if I had a glass of ice-cold foaming Bairisch in my hand. And then I would drink a *bier-junge* with you, young man, and Exeter might be the "Unparteiische."'

'You know it would disagree with you, papa,' said Hel, 'if you did anything of the kind.'

'You need not try to cast derision upon my grey hairs and impaired digestion, my dear' (the Professor's digestion was as efficient as that of Artemus Ward's celebrated pig, which only drew the line at tomb-stones and hot iron), 'and endeavour to show the superiority of a modern and temperate and educated generation over the prattling frivolity of a bygone

age. Girls, nowadays, seem to think that if they have acquired by unremitting toil a knowledge of the eccentric properties of a hypothenuse, and how many stomachs a cow has, they are forthwith at liberty to smile and sit placidly on their hoary and reverend, if barbaric, ancestors, such as myself.'

'Now I appeal to you, Mr. Laurence; have I said or done anything to deserve all this? I don't even know what a hypothenuse is, and never wish to study anything's inside.'

'You go on singing, Laurence,' said the Professor, 'and don't notice that young person's interruptions.'

'I must say,' observed Mr. Exeter, with the air of one who fully recognised the gravity of the situation, 'that I cannot see that Miss Helen has said anything quite as bad as you describe, Miller.'

'Exeter,' replied the Professor, turning

his glittering blue eyes on the Rector, 'you are an acute man, a very acute man. All the treasures of Patristic wisdom and knowledge thou hast. One thing thou lackest—the faculty of seeing a joke.'

'What a jolly old man your father is!' said Rosa to Jack. 'He is good-looking too. Better looking than you are, you know.'

'No doubt,' replied Jack, amused at this remark.

'Now don't go and be offended, because I've said that. I know my language is "painful, and frequent, and free," as "Truthful James" says, but I can't help thinking you are a sort of old friend. You are not shy, and don't mind talking nonsense.'

'I seldom talk anything else, I am informed by my elders, and possibly betters. I don't think we are either of us afflicted with shyness.'

'I suppose I deserve that, now, as a retort to my personal remark. You put it mildly, though, by including yourself.'

'You might take it as a compliment. I should. Do you play or sing or anything?'

'I play in a sort of way, but I'm not going to do it now, before all these people. It isn't good enough. Besides, if I could play as easily as Mozart, or an organ-grinder, I am too lazy to do it just now. It's much easier to sit here and listen to people.'

'Will you let me hear you play to-morrow?'

'All right—if you like—I guess you won't ask me twice. Is your friend a German?'

'He was born in Vienna. He is more of a German than anything else, I believe. But he has been in England a long time.'

'When are you going over to Paris?

Next fall I suppose, when the terms begin ?'

'I believe so.'

'Then you will be here all the time till then ?'

'Most likely.'

'Oh well, I shall give you a whole heap of information between this and then, and make you know the Quartier as if you had lived there half your life.'

'I know it pretty well from the point of view of Mürger and Alfred de Musset. But, I suppose, they are rather played out, by now, as guides ?'

'Haven't read either the one or the other. I haven't read much anyway, except a few of Victor Cherbuliez's novels, and "Notre Dame," and things of that kind. I should like to read some English books; you will have to tell me what to read—we'll talk about it to-morrow, as I see Mrs. Frankland wants to go. Good-night

—don't forget to bring some pictures along.'

An hour later, after a pipe, Jack Miller went to bed and dreamed confusedly that a silver snake was hanging round his neck, and that it had Rosa's face, and that it bit him on the side of the neck, and so remained, and that he thought it the pleasantest form of torture that man could imagine.

CHAPTER III.

MAX GIVES MORE FOREWARNINGS.

Laurence, with all his languor and love of luxury when obtainable, had always preserved the Teutonic habit of early rising. On the morning after the Millers' dinner, he rose at eight and went a short country walk, with the aim, apparently, of losing himself, which intention he quickly succeeded in carrying out.

'Now, I wonder which is the road?' he reflected. 'And I have not even a penny to toss up with. This is the occasion for a pretty village girl, if they grow such things in England, with two milk-cans, to appear

and direct me to the path that leads to breakfast, and give me a drink of milk, cool and reviving, after which I would kiss her instead of wiping my mouth. I wonder who this is? Ah! not the milkmaid, quite.'

Mr. Diggory, the gardener, on his way to Eave Lodge, from breakfast, appeared, seemingly in no violent hurry to recommence his arduous and interesting daily occupation of standing about, leaning on a spade, and giving scornful and imperious instructions to a boy-of-all-work, who 'did' the flower-beds, with a small knife and a wheelbarrow. Max addressed him :

'Good morning; will you do me a favour?'

Stare of surprised interrogation from Mr. Diggory.

'Will you tell me where this road leads to?'

'You're a stranger here, now I be bound,' remarked the old gardener, with a look of suspicion mixed with contempt.

'I am. If I were not, I probably should

not ask you such a question. Have you any real objection to answering it? For if so, I dare say some one else might. I am rather in a hurry to get to Eave Lodge, Professor Miller's.'

'Why, bless my 'art, you're the gen'leman staying at the 'ouse, of course. To think of my not knowing of ye! You'll excuse my fine speaking, sir, but I thought you wast a stranger, sure enough.'

'Have you made a rule not to tell strangers the road?' said the younger man, with an amiable smile. 'However, as you are going where I want to go, I suppose we can go together.'

Diggory stared at the dignity of the thought of walking along the public footpath with a 'genlmn' under the full gaze of two blackbirds and a morning slug, going through the proverbial little tragedy of the early bird and the earlier worm—or slug.

Max went on: 'I am perhaps more of a

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stranger than you think. I was not born in England, and am in an English country place now for the first time. What a nice garden you have at Eave Lodge!'

'We 'ave so. I allows to keep that garden as good as any about yere, and more so, if Miss El didn't go pickin' all my best flowers. But there now, you can't do nothink with a purty young girl like that now, can ye, sir?'

'Depends upon what you mean by nothing. So you think gardening is a nice life?'

'Ain't never thought about it much, sir. I allows I got too much to do to think a'most.'

It was one of Diggory's innocent illusions that he spent a life of unremitting toil, only equalled by Solomon's somewhat similar misconception anent the profligate and hypocritical ant.

'Well, here we are at the house. Thank you for your guidance. We'll meet again

some day'—Diggory for a moment thought this was an aspiration to a happy eternity, and assumed the correct solemnity of expression, while the other went on—'and talk about the flowers and smoke a pipe. Have a cigar?'

'Thank you, sir, thank you kindly. Good morning. That's a genlmn, that is, William. Now then, bring that barrer over, will yer? Move along, can't ye?—wot's your legs for?'

Max ran upstairs, stumbled over an astounded housemaid in an Oriental devotional attitude on a landing, rubbing the floor with a mixture of tea-leaves and dirty water, and penetrated to Jack's studio, and through it into his bedroom, where he found that young gentleman snoring nervously, and lying on his face embracing a pillow, with the sunlight on his yellow hair. He placed a drop of water on the nape of the sleeper's neck. Result, an indescribable

gurgle, shaping itself gradually into the amiable greeting, 'Go to blazes!' Jack sat up, stretched, and observed:

'By Jove! What's the time?'

'Nine.'

Jack looked at a watch under his pillow (which he might have done before), and replied:

'Ananias! It's 8.30.'

'Oh, is it? I thought nine a nice, symmetrical, concise hour to tell you. Get up.'

Jack rose gradually, and walked over to the window—'Splendid morning.' Then to the looking-glass—'What a beastly glass this is! However, I dare say it has some excuse for the revolting spectacle it presents. One seldom looks pretty when one wakes up.'

'And in some cases not for the rest of the day,' observed Max; 'not of course meaning any personality.'

'We'll try the effect of a tub and razor.

Go and light the spirit lamp, will you, and tell the kettle to exert itself. You'll find the things somewhere around.'

'Dear me, American expressions already!' remarked Laurence, as he collected breakfasting apparatus, while sounds as of the evolutions of some marine animal came from the next room, followed by a period of comparative silence, after which Jack appeared a new being, in a pair of trousers and a shirt and slippers—his usual morning costume in temperate weather in male society—and proceeded to make coffee. He and Laurence then sat down, and silently devoured eggs, anchovies, rolls and butter, and finished the repast with long draughts of milk. Having got into a complicated but comfortable position in an arm-chair, and placed his friend in the one opposite, both young men being provided with large pipes, Jack said :

'Well, what do you think of her now ?'

'You should try to get over your habit of using mysterious personal pronouns instead of proper names.'

'Well, how do you like Rosa then? and don't assume a stupidity which you don't possess.'

'I suppose I may say, without risk of personal violence, that I think she is a pretty little girl, and that I maintain my former opinions concerning her.'

'Pretty little girl! My dear sir, she is delicious and intoxicating.'

'So it appears. I fancy that she will cure you ultimately of your way of looking on her sex as something between a toy, an *objet d'art*, and a sweetmeat. Remember what Baudelaire says.'

'Hear him! You talk as if I had never seen or touched a girl before—as if I was the celebrated moth, advancing on the equally renowned candle. My dear fellow, "it's all right," as the drunken

man protested when they ran him in. I'm of a much too material and realistic nature to conceive grand passions. Rosa is like a small and apparently always filled vessel of curaçoa and ambergris, and proportionately pleasing, that is all.'

'Indeed! Of course we know you are the *vieillard né d'hier*, who has tasted all there is to be tasted, and is satiated, who has "passed from the outermost portal," etc. Still, I cannot help having a faint suspicion that there are certain shreds of youthful instinct and potential passion in you, dormant, perhaps, but capable of being excited, even by metaphoric curaçoas and ambergris. Solomon says, "The thing which hath been, is that which shall be; and that which is done, is that which shall be done." And you may be sure he had experience when he wrote that.'

'Solomon also says, "Be not righteous over-much, neither make thyself over-

wise." I recommend the latter clause particularly to your consideration.'

'Well, now, let us look the possible in the face. Supposing you married that girl some day?'

'Pray don't suppose anything of the kind.'

'More surprising things have happened. Rochefoucauld says, "La passion fait souvent un fou du plus habile homme."'

'Look here! I've stood Solomon, but I do draw the line at Rochefoucauld. Solomon is original, and, compared to much other literature of his period, striking and clever; Rochefoucauld is a purveyor of pompous and pedantic and prosy smart sayings. I notice that whenever people wish to make peculiarly insulting insinuations, they cloak them in a quotation from Rochefoucald.'

'Well, withdrawing any expression that the chair may think offensive, I will say,

how long do you imagine a girl like that would stick to you, if you took it into your impulsive head to do some modern equivalent of the Gretna Green business ?'

'Possibly till the next nice young man turned up. But it is quite useless to speculate on matters of this kind. Nothing remarkable is going to happen, and we are simply going to amuse ourselves—one of us is no doubt as pleased as the other to find an intelligent human being near his or her own age to talk to, and the difference of sex makes it more interesting. Besides, it will help me to know her governor in Paris, and through him no doubt a whole crowd of fellows.'

'Has this young lady been to an English school ?'

'No.'

'Or a French one ?'

'I don't know.'

'Does she read Ouida ?'

'I don't know what her literary tastes are.'

'Well, find out. They are a sort of intellectual pulse.'

'She is instinctively, by nature and original sin, a jolly little pagan like ourselves, and is in love with the sky and the sunlight and the trees, in common with me and primitive man. Sometimes she is vaguely troubled with notions of religion, which some well-meaning person has tried to instil into her, fortunately with very slender success. They will have the fate, I fancy, of words written on water.'

'Well, you may thank me for having given you a topic to talk on when you go and call on her, as you have, I suppose, determined to do on the earliest opportunity

'I feel all the gratitude due to you, though I should probably have found something to talk about by my own unassisted

intellect. That is a good clay, isn't it?' he added, taking from the mantel one of those short blackened specimens of which navvies and young University men are so fond.

'Fine! What a confirmed smokard you are.'

'That's not a bad word. By the way, Rosa smokes.'

'Not black clays, I hope?'

'Of course not—cigarettes. She makes them rather well, too.'

'There is some hope for her, then. Anyone that smokes must have something good about them. You can hardly imagine a mean or cowardly person smoking. It is an accomplishment only suited to those who are at least some approach to "children of light." She reminds me rather of one of those Roumanian girls one sees so often in Vienna. The same pale complexion and black eyelashes, and the same

early approach to woman's estate. I should think, now, she was lazy, and enjoyed nice things to eat and drink.'

'I have hardly had time to discover. Certainly, she went for the ice-pudding and sparkling Moselle last night more than the more solemn and solid articles in the *menu*. What a calm, critical way you have of looking at girls—as some fellows do horses!'

'I sometimes wish I was not so critical about everything, including myself. It is uncomfortable to make one's self ridiculous, but it is far more so to appreciate quite as well, and perhaps better than anyone present, how ridiculous one makes one's self. I wonder which enjoys life most — the critical and fastidious fellow, or the one that doesn't care, as long as his several appetites are satisfied, what it is that satisfies them?'

'The critical fellow has a much better

time, undoubtedly. He has the extra pleasure of criticizing, and when the desired objects are obtained, they are so much the more appreciated for having been well selected. You might have thought of all that for yourself.'

'And yet the common everyday coarse and sensual athletic man finds pleasures where we find none.'

'But much more do we find pleasure where he finds none. And we find amusement in him and his pleasures—for a time.'

'Deuced superior lot we think ourselves, don't we?'

'I guess we do, some.'

'If that little American is going to teach you her charming language with this frightful rapidity, I think it may be regarded as an alarming symptom. That is the second Americanism you have used this morning.'

'Go to the devil—go to the piano, I mean, and play or sing something appropriate. I mean to look over some sketches.'

'To give her? Of course. Why not have a joint-stock company of the fine arts? You paint her sunsets by the mile, and I will accompany with music and serenade. I'll get my guitar out of pawn, and we can go about under her windows with these joint persuasions—though she would probably like a monkey and an organ better.'

'Why not suggest that we should disguise ourselves in earth and rags, as Italians, and you play bagpipe, and make eyes, while I ask her to buy a nice image this morning, and hold up a plaster winged Eros? Of course, the fact that the easiest way of seeing her is to go to the front door and ring the bell, is unimportant to the general design, and tends to remove the romance.'

Max played 'Mandolinata;' Jack selected

a few small sketches for Rosa to choose from, and went to the window and leaned on the sill. When Max had finished, Jack said:

'I'll go and get some more clothes on, and we will go out. Shame to stay in longer, such a sunlit morning. Dear me, I feel as idle as if I had an exam. coming on next week.'

So he went and clothed himself carefully, and put on what he considered his most becoming hat, and scented, unperceived by his companion, his rather nebulous and inchoate, still visible, blond moustache. Fates might conspire to bring Rosa across his path.

While he was so engaged, Max played a few bars of a Burschen-Lied, got up and emptied his pipe into the tray provided for the purpose, and blew the ashes off his clothes, straightened his tie, and made the correct amount of yellow silk handkerchief protrude from his pocket. After these

two young men had sufficiently satisfied their several senses of the beautiful and fitting, in personal equipment, put matches, tobacco, pipes, etc., in their pockets, and so adjusted them as to avoid undue bulging, they sallied forth. Jack proposed walking over to Winterdale, and undertook to show Laurence a new path: not the one they had come by from the station, the other day—one rather longer, perhaps, but more calculated to display the beauties of rural England.

Laurence thereupon said, 'I am prepared to go in any direction you please. You are lord of the soil—at least, you're not, but you know the way. I suppose you will take a mean advantage of my ignorance, and lead me mercilessly into any circuitous route as long as it passes the dwelling which has the advantage of containing Miss Rosa.'

'Well, it does happen to go by the house.

Not that that makes any difference, as the road is about seven feet lower than the top of the garden hedge, which is supported by a young precipice of stone wall.'

'Does this arrangement conceal the windows?'

'Well, no. But I have no reason to expect her to be looking out of an upper window, like Bluebeard's wife, or Jezebel, surveying the road for chance passers. She is far more likely to be having breakfast, as it is just eleven.'

'I didn't know what arrangements and plots you might both have entered into, last night, while studying skies and stars, and thunderstorms and other celestial phenomena,' observed Max demurely.

'Well, hang it, you were studying them too, or you wouldn't have seen me——'

'That is different,' retorted the other grandly.

A postman approached, who touched his

hat in recognition of Jack, and gave him some letters, and on having 'Maximilian Laurence' spelt to him, surrendered a small packet rather resembling a book in shape and consistency.

'We'll read our letters further on,' said Jack, pocketing his; 'there is a stile where one can sit—or two, if necessary. It often seems to be necessary, especially on Sunday evenings—the two are then usually of opposite sexes.'

They reached the stile—Jack tore open his letters one after another, and read them. As he did so, he made audible comments, principally interjectional.

'Damn that college porter! Who asked him to give my address to every fool that asked for it? I don't want to be reminded how many tons of Cope's mixture and bird's-eye I haven't paid for. Nor,' he added, opening another, 'of the fact that the main object and aim of a collegiate

body is to extort money and give nothing in return. Just look at that.'

'That' was a tutor's account for the past term, with 'Mr. Robinson's compts.' written across it. 'He might have gone to the trouble and expense of writing "compliments" in full,' commented Max.

'Ha! This is more touching, if less orthographic. Listen:

'"No. 1003, Paphos Street, S. Belgravia.

'"May 1st, 1877.

'"My dear Jack,

'"I have gone to live here now, since I saw you last. I have had a row with the theatre people. Why don't you ever write to me? I never enjoyed myself so much in my life, as when we were with you and Mr. Laurence. How is he? He never kept his promise about sending some verses of his own about me."'

'The devil he didn't! I never knew you made any promise of the kind.'

'Really? There is much you don't know yet. Proceed.'

'"I have got to know a fellow in the Hussars. He is rather nice. Doesn't come up to you, though. Odd foreign sort of name, beginning with a *T*. Sissy, Mr. Laurence will be sorry to hear, died last week in Westminster Hospital; she had been rather unwell for some time. I enclose a photo."'

'She doesn't,' observed Jack, 'but her memory in some respects is defective.'

'"I dare say you are spooning some one else now, and have forgotten all you said, when we went that boating trip on the Thames. I hope I shall see you again some day. Send me your photo.

'"Ever lovingly yours,

'"MINNIE."'

'Ah, these letters are like the Apocalyptic locusts. They are very numerous,

very much alike, and carry their stings in the tail. Listen to the P.S.: "I say, could you *lend* me two or three quid? I'm awfully hard up just now, until I get a re-engagment at some theatre." She'd better ask the Hussar with a name beginning with *T* to assist her to money and a "re-engagment," as she euphoniously terms it. However, one consolation, she doesn't know where I am. This is forwarded by the college porter, and was addressed to the college, that word being unfortunately embellished with a *d*, and shorn of an *l*.'

'Poor Sissy,' said Max; 'we shan't see your light heels and hear your lighter tongue on the Park Lane boards any more. Never mind, there are plenty as good and better than you, turned out from the same mysterious manufactory, by the hundred, like Seville cigars:—

'"Hat uns die Eine fortgeschickt,
Die Andre hat uns zugenickt,
Und wird uns hier das Weinglas leer,
Ei nun, es wächst am Rheine mehr."

Poor Sissy!'

'Very hard lines on her. Still, she has had her share of good things in this world, and took her chance of their leaving a bad taste behind them.'

Laurence opened his package. A small green volume appeared, new and uncut, with thick paper and good margin, bearing the title 'Songs. By Maximilian Laurence.' It was the copy he expected for Hel. He quietly repocketed it, and began to make a cigarette. Jack opened his fourth and last letter.

'By Jove! This throws more light on the subject.

'"Aldershot, 1st May.

'"DEAR MILLER,

'"We are going to be put at Winterdale. At least, several troops of ours are,

Heaven and the Horseguards know why. I haven't been there since I was a boy at Eave. Thought I'd write and say I was coming. I was reminded of your existence the other day by Minnie, late of the Park Lane. She said she once knew you a little, she thought. Jolly girl—no humbug about her—says what she means, and all that. Is there anything to do at Winterdale besides one's duty? By the way, has Mrs. Frankland come yet? I haven't seen her and Rosie for years—not since I went into the service: latter was quite a kid then, but looked like the promise of damned pretty girl. I suppose you've found that out, though, for yourself."'

Jack scowled as he read this, at any other young man having the presumption to know, much more to criticize, Rosa.

'"Just as I was going to finish this, I have been told that we are not to go till autumn manœuvres are over. I wish the

old fools that manage these things would know their own minds—I rather wanted to see you all." (Mind that last remark,' mentally sneered Jack.)

'"Your affectionate cousin, etc.,

'"ALFRED DE TORTOLEONE."

'So you are the young man whose name begins with a *T*. Might have guessed it. And you have supplanted me, eh, and discovered that Minnie "once knew me a little, she thought," and "has no humbug about her?" You are a 'cute lot, you gentlemen of the sword and saddle. Wait till Minnie tells some one else she thinks she once saw you in the stalls, and was told your name, but has forgotten it; would some one else "lend" her a fiver to get a sealskin muff out of pawn?'

'I wonder you don't want to fight a duel with him, for mentioning those two ladies so calmly in the same paragraph.'

'Duel be damned! Let's go home to lunch.'

CHAPTER IV.

HAMMOCK PHILOSOPHY.

'Im wunderschönen Monat Mai
Als alle Knospen sprangen,
Da ist in meinem Herzen
Die Liebe aufgegangen.'

Mrs. Miller intimated in the course of dinner that she wished a letter to be taken to the post. Jack, with a suspicious and unusual willingness to oblige, offered to take it himself, and started with it immediately the meal was over, for fear, he said, of missing the mail. It is necessary to add the to Jack humiliating revelation, that he gave that letter, with sixpence, to the first peasant he met, directing him to

post it, and then, lighting a cigarette, strolled off to Seymour Villa, solacing his sense of hospitality with the thought that Laurence could amuse himself in expounding his poetry to Hel on the terrace, among the oleanders, and probably would not miss him for a time. Having arrived, he rang the bell, and was admitted to the drawing-room, where he found Mrs. Frankland alone, writing a letter.

'Why, how do you do, Mr. Miller? Rosie gave me directions to send you out into the garden if you came. She's settled that it is summer, because there have been two or three fine days, and has insisted on having a hammock fixed up under the trees, and being quite tropical. Guess she'll get a bad cold soon, and take to sealskins again. When you are tired of being out there, or feel hungry, make her come in, and we'll try and give you some sort of supper. How is Mrs. Miller and all your relations?'

'Quite well, thanks. Hope you are none the worse for last night's bad weather?'

'Oh, we're quite spry. I'm just writing to your aunt, the Marquise de Tortoleone; shall I give her your love?'

'Oh, by all means. Well, I won't interrupt you any longer,' and Jack walked out of the French window, and explored the garden, and soon discovered a sort of chrysalis, suspended between two small trees, containing an inner lining of rug and cushion, disposed around a nucleus of Rosa —a very comfortable-looking, lazy little nucleus, who had strewed the ground with one or two library novels, a photograph-album, a paper of tobacco, a box of matches, a sunshade, and some chocolate *bon-bons* in a small box. A small, intermittent stream of blue smoke betokened that there was life and wakefulness within the chrysalis, and a voice came from it, saying rather shyly:

'Is that you, Jack?'

'It is.'

'Have you brought those sketches? Ah, I see you have. Let's look.'

Jack delivered up a portfolio.

'Sit down on the grass and make yourself at home. This hammock, unfortunately, can't hold two, or it and the trees would come to grief. Have some chocolate?'

'No, thank you,' said Jack, getting into as graceful an attitude as he could command, and glancing admiringly at a pair of small bronze kid feet, with innumerable buttons, slightly projecting from the chrysalis.

'I dare say you would rather smoke—there's lots of tobacco there. I rather scared them in Winterdale, by going into a shop and buying it. Have you got a pipe along?'

Jack always had a pipe 'along,' and gratefully produced and filled it. Rosa

looked through the sketches with commendatory remarks, saying at last, 'May I choose one to keep ?'

'Certainly—that is what I brought them for. You remember the condition on which you accept one ?'

'Oh yes. You are to call me Rosa—everyone I ever knew did. "Miss Taylor" sounds solemn and absurd. I brought out my album, as I thought you would like to see it. I want to show you my old Paris friends.'

Jack opened the album, and said : 'You must make a short descriptive speech at each, like the panorama people, you know.'

'Yes—we'd have had a piano out if we'd thought of it. That is Paul Félix. He died, you know, in '70.'

'He is a painter, evidently. It is a grand face. How well they do photos in Paris !'

'And that is Dr. Taylor, with the spectacles and black moustache. I per-

suaded him to shave immediately before getting it done. He is always very lazy about that.'

'Looks as if he had seen the world considerably—as if, like King Lear, he "had the white hairs in his beard ere the black ones were there." I shall be glad to meet him. And who is this young lady?'

'That is Césarine, who used to help to take care of me when I was very small. She is a great friend of mine. That was taken some years ago. I don't know whether it's like her now.'

If Rosa had only known what Césarine was like when she spoke! For that young lady had disappeared from her brasserie mysteriously, and a great gulf had received her from public sight—an abyss whither many of her kind make an early descent, entitled the Hotel-Dieu. For some while nothing was known of her in the 'Boul. Mich.,' until Charles Sansouci, student of

medicine, observed to his friend (of the same humane profession), Jules Sansixsous, in the Café Américain :

'Remember Césarine ?'

'Well—usé les manches de plusieurs vestes, à son comptoir. What about her ?'

'Died this morning.'

'Ah! Should think she would cut up well. Let's struggle to have her at our table, in the Amphitheatre, for old acquaintance' sake. She has often been at our table before.'

'I am afraid we shan't have that privilege. A man with a grey-black moustache, a hook nose, and a nasal voice, who said he was a doctor, had her removed at his expense to Montparnasse. The garçon at the Amphitheatre said his brother, who was what he called an "artist in stone," had orders for a small headstone, with this adaptation from De Musset :

'"Çigît l'étui d'une perle fine
Dite Césarine."'

'Not bad that. Let's have some more beer.'

But this Rosa did not know. The album contained further photographs of Mrs. Frankland, and of Rosa herself, looking grave and subdued, and incapable of ever smiling again, as people, under the circumstances attending such portraiture, usually do.

'You must show me your collection of photos some time,' said Rosa. 'I know you must have a lot—far more than I have.'

'I have a few, which you are quite at liberty to see. Which of those sketches are you going to take?'

'I would like this. It is that fir-tree group near your house, isn't it?'

'It flatters itself it is.'

'Though it doesn't flatter the fir-trees, as I might say if I wished to be rude. No, it is very nice indeed. I wish I could paint like that.'

'Don't you do it at all?'

'I used to think I could paint some, when I messed about with Paul's studio things, but I've given it up. I've seen pictures and skies enough to convince me I never shall paint them. When I came across from Calais, I saw the sea for the first time. I wished again I could paint. It was real splendid. But I manage to be pretty happy without.'

'You looked the picture of quiet enjoyment when I came here.'

'Don't I look so now?'

'Well, yes—more or less. I can quite imagine an exceedingly enjoyable life, with certain simple ingredients, such as an eternally fine evening (say in May), with changing skies, a hammock, a novel to whose end one could never exactly arrive, an inexhaustible supply of tobacco, the thermometer at a perpetual 70°, and perhaps a good band in the distance dis-

coursing sweet melody, suited always to the chapter one might be reading.'

'Don't any society come into your picture?'

'Certainly—if I can get it. But it would have to be very well chosen, and would involve a duplex arrangement of all the surroundings. For instance, one person might be wanting the musicians to play Strauss, or Müller, or Waldteufel, while the other would be desirous of the "Dead March," or the "Soldier's Chorus." And, generally speaking, there would necessarily be two hammocks, and two sets of trees for them to depend from.'

'One might read aloud to the other. That would settle the music difficulty.'

'And read to himself when the "other" had been successfully plunged into slumber. Something in that. By the way, may I look at this book you have here? Ah, "Pendennis." Old friend of mine.'

'I got it from the library here at Winterdale. It is the first book of Thackeray's I've ever read. I like it awfully. The London part is a little like the life in the Quartier, though different. Is Oxbridge life what he describes it as ?'

'Not so much now. Men don't hunt and drive tandems as much now, or play the unmitigated landed proprietor. Life is too short, and money too scarce, and competition for places in the honour lists too great. Men come up more to work now. You know, we are rather a funny people in England. It's only a few years ago that you had to be a member of the Church of England, and sign your adhesion to nearly forty small paragraphs, composed and edited by some doubtless eminent, though peculiar-minded divines of Queen Elizabeth's time. Now the Jew, Turk, infidel and heretic can (and do) come up in swarms, and the result is, that it is a far

more civilized and more intellectual place than in "Pendennis's" time. Half the healthy heathendom of the country comes out of the two Universities. By Jove, though, it's hard on you to have to listen to an elucidation of my opinions on theology and the higher culture.'

'Go on; I like to hear you talking about these things.'

'We are learning now, or beginning to learn, how wise were the old pagans. They held that it was waste of breath to discuss whether life was worth living, and the best way to find out was to live it in the best and most enjoyable fashion possible. This best way they discovered to consist in a due appreciation of, and sympathy with, everything that was beautiful and pleasant in nature and art, and an intense attachment to all that is human and natural in life, a fearless field of ideas and speculations, and a placid disregard of any pro-

blematic future. The ultimate future to them was Lethe. The result of all this is, that they have left works, and a memory, and a taste that the world will never weary of, abuse them as it may in its impotent endeavours to make a better system. Now it's your turn to talk.'

'The pagans hadn't got one thing we have: they hadn't tobacco.'

'Nor, probably, hammocks.'

'I believe some people are made differently to others, and able to live in a different way, and to enjoy different things. Now some people are awfully good, and really like reading their Bibles and going to church and all that. I don't like either, and don't suppose I ever shall. I can't help not liking it any more than I can help having a yellow skin!'

'Hätte Gott mich anders gewollt,' thought Jack, 'so hätt' er mich anders gebaut.'

'I don't see why we shouldn't just quietly go along, each as we like, instead of one person getting mad or getting into despair because you can't understand or enjoy exactly the same thing as they do. I'm sure I don't mind people being religious if they like it. Why can't they let me be as I like?'

'It is a delightful idea; but you will never get the other party to recognise it. However, the older the world gets the wider one's possible sympathies seem to get. Things once diametrically opposed seem to get more reconciled. We can hardly imagine Milton reading Wycherley, and I'm sure Wycherley wouldn't like Milton—same way with, say, Dante and Rabelais. But it is the privilege of us in the present century to read, and to some extent like and admire all four, and read the Song of Solomon and the Sermon on the Mount with nearly equal, though of

course totally different, sympathies. Perhaps some day the good people will be able to extend their charity to us similarly. At present we must extend ours to them.'

'Your sister is religious, isn't she? I beg your pardon,' said Rosa, 'I don't know that I have any business to ask.'

'Yes; and yet I think you and she would be very good friends.'

'I am sure of it; I mean to try, anyhow.'

'I expect you'll like each other. Box her ears if she tries to come the church-business with you.'

'Is that your way of "extending our charity" to religious people?'

'Let's change the subject. You said you would play something to me by-and-by. I think you were also kind enough to promise to sing a student's song?'

'I will, if Mrs. Frankland will stand it. She lets me do it when we are by our-

selves, and I don't see why I shouldn't now. She lets me do most things I like. I suppose she guesses I'd go straight away by the next train if she didn't; and she rather likes to have me here, because I'm the only person that talks to her about Paris and her friends and all that in a sensible way, and don't look shocked if she gets up at twelve in the morning; in fact, I'm generally the latest of the two.'

'I hope under the circumstances that Mrs. Frankland will go on giving you the reins; at any rate, not do anything calculated to start you off in a train for a few months yet; though I don't know where you would go to or what good you would get by such a sudden and decided step.'

'I should go to Paris.'

'Indeed!'

'Listen!—there's some one coming along the road. Go and look through the hedge, and see if it's any one coming

here. You'll find a hole I've made for the purpose. Stay a minute; there's a nice furry caterpillar making himself into a note of interrogation on the collar of your coat behind. Kneel down here, and I'll take him in charge and torment him a little.'

Jack knelt by the hammock, and allowed Rosa to remove the audacious and many-legged investigator. This little scene was witnessed by the passer-by, who was none other than Arthur Radford, who had discovered that a hole under a hedge could be seen through from outside as well as from inside. He walked on, in cursing and bitterness, and Jack recognised him when he went to the loophole.

'By Jove, it's Radford!'

A ring at the bell was heard.

'No student's song for you to-night, Jack,' observed Rosa.

CHAPTER V.

THE RIVALS.

Whilst the immense supplies of wisdom and experience residing in the two respective cranial cavities of these two young people in the garden of Seymour Villa were uniting to devise improved schemes for the universe and the happiness of the human race, General and Mrs. Radford and their talented son Arthur had just finished dinner, and were discussing nothing particular with their customary energy and perseverance.

The General took sherry after dinner in the drawing-room, and made fiery com-

ments on the behaviour of the representatives of his great and down-trodden country —Ireland—and that of its contemptible and tyrannical foes, the British Government, as gathered from the daily papers.

Mrs. Radford took tea, and usually had the temerity, from a mistaken sense of duty and veracity, to differ from the General in all his own and his compatriots' opinions.

Arthur on this occasion fidgeted, and thought the whole thing 'beastly rot.'

The General extracted opinions from his newspapers and from his brother warriors, who prattled daily together over brandy and soda in the Winterdale Club, and brought them out with much decision and some violence as his own.

The General's wife based hers on what she called common sense, which was in her case, as in that of many others, an illusive paraphrase for common-place.

Both were placed on the fair footing of mutual ignorance of the subject on which they talked.

The General—he was always known as 'the General,' because Mrs. Radford had a way, when talking about him to her friends, or when giving orders to her servants in which his name should occur, of denoting him with a definite article and his title, as above, as though there were but one General in Winterdale, whereas there were, in reality, enough old field-officers to lead the largest of armies to its destruction.

The General, I proceed to say, was, as has been implied, an Irishman. He had grizzly short hair—very short; he thought a man who allowed his hair to be an inch longer than that of a hedgehog, or of a British officer, was the 'unclean thing' personified. He had whity-brown eye-brows, eyes of the same colour, and a

white moustache. His face and the back of his neck were a deep red, the result of the combined efforts of the sun, sherry, brandy and soda, and a rich meat diet. The same causes, or some of them, had probably given the end of his nose a slightly blueish tint.

The sunset light this evening, which lasted long after the departure of the sun, was now falling with great effect on the General's face, and showing off his after-dinner complexion to advantage, as he held forth on 'that fellow Parnell, by the Lord,' who, it appeared, was destined to be the long-expected saviour of his land, 'by fair constitutional means, mind you! None of your revolutionary business for me!' This at Mrs. Radford, who was presumably prepared to carry the torch of rebellion and fiery cross of civil war through Ireland, if not prevented by arguments. Really, she fancied herself a

kind of Liberal, and admired Lord Shaftesbury, and promoted 'movements.' She had been very enthusiastic about the 'Temperance Movement,' until she tried her persuasions on her husband, as to the giving up of glasses of sherry, or more likely of brandy and soda, between meals.

The General did not at first fully comprehend, and thought she was joking, and when he realized that she was for the time apparently in earnest about it, he said :

'My dear, ye don't understand anything about the matter. Leave the poor fellows in the town to take their whisky in peace. It's the only pleasure they have. My example, is it ? By the Lord, I don't get drunk, do I ? Ye might find some other fellow much worse. Why, in the Crimea, Tom Geoghegan of the 88th used to drink a quart of whisky a day, and it never did him a bit of harm—better officer never stepped. There was O'Reilly too. It's

no true Irishman,' etc., etc., Parnell *ad. lib.*

Mrs. Radford gave it up as hopeless, and could not very well preach abstinence to the public whilst her husband was retailing adventures with a shiny face and a blue nose at the club. Not that the General, despite the Crimean references which so frequently occurred in his conversation, had ever been in an action in his life. It is true that he had been in the Crimean expedition, but his duties there consisted in counting the landing of left-foot boots and shoddy overcoats at Varna, and similar interesting and hazardous occupations, until he came home with a fever. Still, he had been 'in the Crimea.' That great fact remained, though he had never actually set foot on the Crim Peninsula, and was recognised as all-sufficient by a patriotic nation, and an all-wise Administration that promoted him, and

two beneficent Sovereigns who affixed two medals to his padded pectoral region with two pins.

Mrs. Radford had now taken to Vivisection,—at least so the General said. What he meant was that she had taken part in the Anti-Vivisection Movement.

As we have seen, this couple were not very intellectual, not very charitable, and not very good-natured; they revered wealth and position, respected the opinions, and excused the failings of people that possessed one or both. They revered 'institutions' also, to a large extent, such as the Constitution (excepting the Irish connection from the General's point of view); the Church, and its august and erudite representative, the Bishop of Winterdale; the Army, of course, and the authorities of 'the Club,' who belonged or had belonged to it. Of literary, artistic and intellectual life and works, they knew little, and liked less.

'Of course, one admires Millais, you know, and Frith, and Doré, and Miss Thompson, and those; but really I think a great deal of rubbish is painted and written nowadays,' observed Mrs. Radford, apropos of the Academy. 'When I was a girl there were not so many books, and we read those we had a great deal more carefully, in consequence.'

On amusements their ideas were peculiar and their tastes odd. The General liked ballets, and Mrs. Radford thought the theatrical life and profession a great temptation, and never entered a playhouse. It is true that when a travelling company played comedies in the Winterdale Town Hall at half-past two in the afternoon, Mrs. Radford felt allowed by her conscience to witness them, but then that was different. Quantities of respectable people—'one's friends, you know'—and several of the local clergy with their numerous families went

too, and shed an atmosphere of soberness and chastity over the whole.

They read the newspapers a good deal, and the Bible at proper seasons. At other times, the General read the *Sporting Times*, and Mrs. Radford library novels. Still, with all their uninviting and uninteresting aspects, these two were not unamiable. They had a great love for their son, and had possibly once had some kind of love for one another.

The General did not altogether share his wife's illusion that Arthur was a genius, but he hoped he might get on, and grow into another General, and drink sherry (he did that already) 'like his old father, by the Lord,' and Messrs. Geoghegan, O'Reilly, etc., of the 88th (from whose tombs of Crimean turf, it is said by ill-natured acquaintances, a slight odour of whisky still filters faintly up, with the daisies, through the porous soil).

Arthur walked up and down the room this evening, and looked as if he wished to leave it. He had already brought expressions of wrath from one parent, and of grief from the other, on himself, for having muttered something that sounded suspiciously like 'Parnell be damned!' Nor was he pleased at the way in which his father and mother discussed the two ladies at Seymour Villa. Mrs. Radford gave an account of her visit, and said that Mrs. Frankland was a ladylike woman, and appeared to be very well off, but said that the girl seemed odd, and drank coffee and spirits, and looked very singular ('looked devilish pretty,' thought Arthur, 'and that's singular enough here'). Mrs. Radford added that she had heard to-day that 'that' Miss Taylor had been observed entering the shop of a Winterdale tobacconist.

'Are ye sure all this is true, dear?' said the wary warrior.

'Of course it is true!—haven't I seen the girl with my own eyes? The room smelt of tobacco.'

'And is she a pretty gurl? You can answer that question though, Arthur, me boy, better than your mother.'

'Yes, she is rather decent-looking,' replied Arthur, in a careless tone.

'Well!' said Mrs. Radford, 'that's the last word I should have chosen, I'm sure.'

'Ye weren't invited to choose one at all, Lov. I think I ought to call on these people. The husband was a soldier, wasn't he, of some kind?'

'Yes. But I don't think it would look very well for you to call on two ladies by yourself, especially when I have been there only this afternoon.'

'And why the devil shouldn't I call on ladies by myself? It isn't the first time, by the Lord!' and here the General

laughed, drank sherry, choked, and turned purple, and Mrs. Radford said :

'I wonder you can talk like that—before Arthur too.'

'Before Arthur, is it? He knows his way about the world quite as well as I do, dear, and with the modern improvements. It would be a pity if he didn't learn that, with three years of Camford, considering that he's learned nothing else.'

Arthur did know his way in the world about as well as the General—but not better. He knew his way from his home to a snug little bar in a back street, up a passage, in the old part of Winterdale, conveniently near to the cathedral, where a young lady—whom Arthur described as a great pal of his—served. Thither he now proceeded, knowing that his parents would fight over the Frankland family, and that the General would choke over his own jokes, all the evening. Before this

bar Arthur found his friend the billiard-marker, indulging in gin and bitters, and behind it his friend the barmaid, indulging in the *Family Herald.*

She was a robust, handsome, yellow-haired girl, who had been through what might be termed an academic education at Oxbridge, and found Winterdale, in consequence, very dull, and was glad to find a man who could talk 'Varsity' shop, and tell anecdotes of hazardous adventure with proctors, etc., even if he had the rather uninviting expression and exiguous intellect of Arthur Radford.

Jack had not discovered her. Arthur trusted he might not, instinctively aware that Jack would 'sit on' him before her, in his usual placid and generous style, and would probably amuse Miss Polly by so doing, more than he (Arthur) ever did. But Jack had *not* discovered her yet, and she rather appreciated Arthur, and believed

in his innocent 'fast man' airs, and the guileless gay-Lothario swagger which he tried to put on, and admired the pipes he ruined his constitution in colouring, and got a holiday to look at him doing high jumps at the Winterdale sports. She welcomed him to the bar, as he came in the evening, with a smile, and the marker greeted him with a sort of familiar deference.

The marker was not enamoured with the barmaid. He was a shrivelled little man like a jockey, and might be any age from five-and-twenty to five-and-fifty, and formed attachments to nothing except gin and three balls, either on a table or hanging over a shop, according as his worldly gear came or went.

Miss Polly was not very clever, but she was good-natured, and did not drop her *h*'s, and had a magnificent sculpturesque body, and always dressed it well.

Miss Polly had had a little conversation

with the marker on the Frankland family before Arthur came in. The marker knew everything and a good deal more, about everybody in Winterdale, and told her how Miss Taylor had bought tobacco in Jim Shagg's emporium of that useful herb, and a few other interesting details about her appearance, etc. Miss Polly was jealous of Rosa on account of Arthur, and this the marker knew, and it amused him to make her more so.

When Arthur came the marker went, leaving Arthur and Polly *tête-à-tête.* The latter began to reproach Arthur for his non-appearance there lately, and to wonder whom he had found to pass his time with, and to believe he didn't care about her the least, etc., at some length. Arthur, immensely pleased by these tokens of regard, endeavoured to soothe Polly by gentle and delicate badinage of a flattering kind, such as he was capable of.

Polly would not unbend at this, and said she dared say, and believed he was making love to that young American lady. Arthur put on the Lothario expression, and said, 'Do you think so? Quite a mistake—nothing of that about me,' with a sort of implication that there was a good deal of 'that' about him. After a little cross-examination, Polly was brought to admit that she cared a good deal about Arthur, and managed to work up a small sob, which had great effect on this susceptible youth. Shortly after this, I regret to record, she allowed herself to be kissed across the bar, which was narrow, and deposited two tears on Arthur's coat. He then said good-night, and determined that a country walk and a pipe would be wholesome and refreshing. His country walk led him, as we have seen, to a hole in a hedge, where he scratched the end of his nose with a wild rose spray, and would have quoted, 'No

thorns go as deep as a rose's,' had he been aware that such a line existed in print.

There must have been something good about Arthur, or a nice girl like poor Polly would not have been so fond of him.

Impulse, resistless as a tide, regardless of taste and tact and time, made him go on to the door and ring the bell, and ask if Mrs. Frankland were at home, which, as we know, she was. He arrived in the drawing-room, hoping he did not look as hot as he felt, and announced that he happened to be passing, and thought he would call, though he was afraid it was rather late for a visit.

'Oh dear no,' replied Mrs. Frankland cheerfully. 'We make it quite a practice to call in the evening at home. I think it's almost the best time, don't you?'

'It's very pleasant. Rather warm, don't you think?'

'Yes, I like it to be quite as warm as this for comfort.'

'Wonder if she's as warm as I am?' thought Arthur, then added aloud:

'Is Miss Taylor quite well?'

'Yes, thank you. She has been out in the garden with young Mr. Miller for the last hour. I wish they would come in to supper.'

Arthur was inwardly devoured by envy, hate, malice, and all uncharitableness at the word 'hour,' of which the only outward and audible sign was: 'Shall I say you wish them to come in?'

'Oh dear no; don't you trouble, Mr. Radford—Rosie don't generally obey messages when she is amused. I suppose she *is* amused, or her appetite would have brought her in. It's rather hard on Mr. Miller, though.'

'Oh, awfully!' replied Arthur, with an approach to sardonic pleasantry.

Just then the two errant young persons under discussion appeared—Rosa first, carrying a sketch and some chocolate *bon-bons;* Jack second, carrying a rug, a photograph-album, a three volume novel, a parcel of tobacco, a portfolio, and the other etceteras and appurtenances of Rosa's encampment.

'Thanks,' said she, 'horrid shame to make you carry them all. Here, put them down on the passage table, anywhere, never mind about tidiness. I never do.'

'Very true, Rosie. Let me call your attention to the presence of Mr. Radford.'

Mutual 'How-do-you-do?' then again from Mrs. Frankland:

'I hope you are not dying of hunger, Mr. Miller? I hope you have brought an appetite along, Mr. Radford?'

Arthur replied:

'Oh thanks! Yes.'

Arthur usually had an appetite. He

regarded Jack with a gloomy defiance. Jack looked placidly unconscious of it. As a matter of fact, he perceived it perfectly, and was much entertained thereby. He had not known Arthur all these years without acquiring a tolerable acquaintance with the few and simple variations and moods of his friend, as made manifest in his expression. He was just then thinking that an additional chapter might be put to the 'Expression of the Emotions in the Lower Animals,' by C. Darwin, F.R.S., LL.D., which he had recently read.

Mrs. Frankland made them all come into the next room, where an inviting little supper was spread, consisting of lobster salad, cold fowl, and strawberries and cream, to be assisted, if necessary, in their journey of alimentation, and (it is to be hoped) of digestion, by tall graceful bottles of Braunberger. Arthur stood behind his chair for a moment, mechanically, through

the force of habit, expecting grace, and then sat down with a blush, when he discovered the practice was ignored. The General, of course, always preferred a rapidly muttered something to the family meals, which might have been an imprecation, or, indeed, anything else, as far as the impartial auditor could gather. Mrs. Radford said in a serious tone (with emphasis on every other word, so as to convert the whole into a kind of imperfect iambic) a short sentence, ending in Amen, should her chief be absent.

'Well, how have you two been spending the time?' asked Mrs. Frankland.

'Catching caterpillars,' said Rosa.

'Exchanging ideas on the various methods of promoting the welfare of Humanity, with a large *H*,' said Jack, with a smile; 'till we came to the conclusion that the best means to that end, in our case, was to eat supper—and it looks as if we were right,' he added, glancing at the table.

Mrs. Frankland took the end of the table nearest the salad, and assisted her guests to it. Rosa sat opposite to her, and took charge of a dish of strawberries. The two young men sat opposite to each other. Arthur was torturing his mind for something to say, while Jack shovelled in quantities of lobster salad, and talked a great deal between the mouthfuls, describing what a relief it was to return to civilized meals once more, after the experience of Oxbridge, 'Where, you know,' he said, 'we depend more on accident and impulse than any regular programme. If it were about one in the morning, for example, and we were hungry, we never hesitated to begin a sort of picnic on chairs in each other's rooms, collecting together loaves, fishes, jam, or whatever was forthcoming, and perhaps drinking brandy in teacups. Yet it was very jolly.'

'And I dare say you are sorry to

leave it, now, after all,' said Mrs. Frankland.

'On the whole, I think not. I have had three years of English student life, and am quite prepared to welcome a change. I have extracted from Oxbridge all the amusement it is capable of affording, I fancy. I devoted a good deal of time and energy to that, and am properly grateful to it for all the good times I have had. Now, however, that the cup is emptied, and only the taste remains, I care about it no longer. All my old friends will be scattering over the world, and I have no sentimental attachment to the cloisters and pavements of the colleges—not at all. None of the feeling you hear people bring out in the words, "My dear old college," etc. I cannot help looking on the college as a convenient means for tutors and cooks to amass lucre, and for deans to exert their authority in promoting their own absurd

ideas. A college is a sort of museum of obsolete ideas, in one aspect, and a gigantic and lucrative speculation in the other. I look forward to going to Paris.'

'Is that your impression of a college, Mr. Radford?'

'No. Our college was always head of the river, and that was something to be proud of. We used to carry off the odds in the athletics if anyone did. Very good college generally—awfully jolly life, I think. But you never rowed, Miller, did you?'

'Seldom, and when I did it was for pleasure, not for duty. Training was a form of subjugation to the will of an imperious captain which I could not submit to—especially when I knew that he couldn't spell "rowlock," and didn't even know on what principle his rules of diet were founded. It's really too much to expect a physiologist to listen silently

to the directions and explanations of boating men on the action of jelly on the muscles.'

'It would do you no end of good to go into training,' asserted Arthur. 'It does me.'

'Indeed? I feel quite as happy as a rational being can hope to, without it. Besides, it obliges you to sit with your boat's-crew in hall, and breakfast with them daily, and listen to their eternal drivel of rowing shop, and hear why Jones has been put sixth instead of fifth, and so on, for days and days; and they won't let you smoke, or go to bed or get up at a civilized hour.'

'Well, but if everyone looked at it in that light there'd be no rowing, and no inter-'Varsity race.' This Arthur regarded as conclusive.

'In the first place, everyone *doesn't* look at it in that light. In the second, if

they did, I shouldn't feel grievously afflicted, and I should not be sorry to hear, as I expect we shall hear in time, that the inter-'Varsity race has been suppressed under the Public Nuisances Act.'

'Well, it won't be till you get in some beastly Radical Government.'

'And even they would perform some few other works of darkness first. For, after all, audacious as the sentiment may sound from the mouth of an ex-'Varsity man, the annual race is not the most important blot on the Constitution; for I admit it may be regarded as almost part of it.'

'Take some strawberries and cream, Mr. Miller,' said Rosa. 'Mr. Radford, can I help you?'

'Thanks, I will take a few.'

Arthur was inwardly convinced that there would be what he called a 'shine' when he reached home, and a court-martial

held to inquire into the reasons of his absence. For of course the General, being an old soldier, insisted on having the house bolted and barred at ten p.m. precisely, so that anyone coming after that hour must ring the bell, to be answered by the General in person, in a red dressing-gown and carrying a candle. Jack had no such fears. The Professor's family did not retire early, and when they did the door was not often locked. If the hypothetic burglar did come, Professor Miller would in all likelihood come out quietly with a German pipe in his mouth, and begin gently explaining to him the segmentation of the skull until the ruffian fled, convinced that his own was undergoing the process through the incursion of new and alarming ideas couched in new and alarming language.

Weighed down by such anxieties, Arthur's never very brilliant mind pro-

duced fewer ideas and less speech generally than he could have desired, and, becoming convinced slowly and much against his will that he was not making the wished-for impression, he fell back for an occupation upon that appetite which seldom deserted him at any moment, and looked up occasionally to glare wrathfully at Jack, or to answer some question of Mrs. Frankland's. Jack did talking enough for half a dozen, generally to Mrs. Frankland, but at Rosa—*i.e.*, he spoke in such manner as to call Rosa's attention and interest to his discourse and the style of it, without actually addressing a remark to her, a proceeding rather common among young men in Jack's position.

After supper, Rosa, who was becoming bright-eyed and lively from the iced Moselle wine with which Jack had carefully and constantly filled her glass, made the original and ingenious proposal :

'Let's do something. Why not play cards? It has a wicked sort of look about it! Can you play whist, Mr. Radford?'

'Oh, yes.'

'Very well. Then, Mr. Miller, will you help me get the table and candles and things? Here they are. You can put your wine on the card-table if you like. I know you all want to smoke. Mr. Radford, you won't tell everybody that I smoke and gamble, will you?' pleaded Rosa, as she made a cigarette for herself, and handed round the paper.

'No,' replied Arthur, rejoiced to have the confidence placed in him, and struggling with a cigarette-paper and some tobacco, which he succeeded in uniting into a kind of bundle with the tobacco exuding in shreds at the side, which excited derisive comments from Rosa.

CHAPTER VI.

'De omnibus rebus—et aliis.'

It is scarcely necessary to say that Hel Miller and Maximilian Laurence occupied the garden of Eave Lodge for most of the after-dinner part of the same fair late April evening which saw Jack learning from the lips of Rosa how far life was worth living. The first-mentioned couple walked slowly up and down the terrace, while the Professor sat on the parapet, smoking his long porcelain-bowled pipe, with the Castle of Heidelberg emblazoned on it. Mrs. Miller, labouring under a superstitious dread of possible east winds, with their neuralgic

potentialities, stayed within, and busied herself in the philanthropic work of preparing coffee.

'Miss Miller,' said Max, 'I have obeyed your orders, and procured this copy of my small "collected works," which is at your service. I have taken the liberty of cutting the leaves. I repeat now what I said before—that I cannot guarantee that you will be pleased with the inside.'

'Thank you, so much; the outside looks very nice,' replied Hel, opening the grey-green octavo. (The motto on the title page was 'Bien heureux est qui rien n'y a.') 'I must ask you one question, Mr. Laurence, on which a good deal of my appreciation depends. Are you an advanced thinker?'

'I loathe the advanced thinkers from the bottom of my heart.'

'That is satisfactory. My brother was one during his first year at Oxbridge. He has, however, got over it now.'

'Yes, I know. His strong sense of the ridiculous was calculated to cure him of that.'

Hel slowly turned over the pages, remarking:

'Isn't it a nice evening? The whole air smells of flowers.'

'Yes; and the number of nightingales singing all at once is delightfully bewildering. This is an evening Heine's soul would have rejoiced in, with this light, these sounds and scents, and those dark branches above. They would all have lulled the poor tired human nightingale into dreams of the few happy days of his life, before the spring, and the flowers, and two beautiful eyes had conspired to destroy his peace.'

'You are very fond of Heine, aren't you?'

'I am. I began to read him first when I was exactly in the right temperament, and have felt a sort of friendly gratitude

to him ever since. I should like to shake hands with him across the Styx.'

Hel was looking through the first short poem in Laurence's book. It spoke of one who floated along without will or aim, without rudder or pilot, in a slow open boat, away towards the sunset, while the darkness followed behind, on a hot calm misty sea. Once he had sailed gaily over a sunlit path of ripples, while a beautiful, dripping, sparkling brown Nixe held the helm; but she suddenly left him, called away by the fair temptations and beautiful voices of the mysterious purple deep, and went, throwing him a last bewildering smile. When she deserted him she took the rudder with her—took, too, all his love of progress, all his reason, all his energy, and all the light of his life, leaving him only a longing to have green and purple waters close over him, that he might be with her for ever.

This legend was in a melodious metre, in taking words—in fact, on the whole, was what a young lady of average critical calibre would call 'pretty.'

Hel called it nothing, but remarked after a pause:

'I think I need not ask if there is a story attached to that, and it would be only impertinent in me to ask you to tell it.'

This evidently meant: 'I am dying to hear the anecdote in literal prose, and daren't ask.' But Laurence did not choose to take this hint, and replied:

'It is only of personal interest in its anecdotal form—such a story as half the men you meet must have hidden somewhere in their memory.'

Hel thought of the men she had met—tennis-playing curates and dancing dragoons, mostly having about as much 'story' in their existence as the knife-

grinder of Mr. Canning. However, she replied :

'I suppose nearly everyone has a story, some two or three, like houses. Oh, I beg your pardon! I don't often perpetrate jests like that. It shan't occur again.'

'Not quite everyone. I should scarcely think, for example, that you had a story—yet.'

'I don't look very like it, do I? I suppose I am just the height of moderate commonplace.'

'I am sure I never insinuated anything so rude or so libellous as that. And I may now take the opportunity to state that a young lady who takes an interest in literature, particularly in German literature, is, as far as I can ascertain, neither common nor commonplace.'

'I am afraid I didn't care much for German literature before——'

'Before what?'

'Before—you came here, in fact.'

'Ah! But it is just the time for you to begin to care for it now. You may perhaps subsequently develop into a girl with a story—a fairy-tale. There is a dim sort of Märchen in your eyes sometimes, I think, now. You will find it out some day—and perhaps tell it.'

'Shall we sit down here?' said Hel, as they passed a wooden seat under a cypress-tree, with long grass growing half as high as the bench.

'Very well—for a little while. But you will recollect that it is not summer, and that I shall be pitched into if you catch cold.'

'Let us stay until the colour goes out of the sky and it is not worth looking at any more. I can't think how some people can go on living without caring ever to notice anything beautiful. If you talk to them about the sky, they say, "Ah! looks like

rain to-morrow, doesn't it?" as if the only important thing in the world were the weather!'

'Like this beetle. All his life he has never looked up from the dirt he lives in. Now he is on his back, exposed to the full heaven for the first time — for he is dead.'

'Poor little beetle!'

'We'll give him a decent funeral, any how.'

And Max bored in the soft earth with his stick, and the deceased beetle was laid in the receptacle so made. A stone was found to fit over him, and Hel planted a small cypress twig over it.

'Now we shall have to come and visit this place from time to time,' said Hel, 'and strew flowers here.'

'And I might improve the occasion by a discourse on the resemblance of a certain large proportion of humanity to beetles.'

'You had better give the first discourse of the series now. Why are beetles like humanity?'

'Your brother would say, "I don't know. Ask another." However, the resemblance is not far to seek. Beetles look at the ground they grub in, and don't care what the sky is like, as long as they can extract the average profits, whatever they may be, out of dirty transactions. They formed a mutual benefit society in a sugar-basin in my gyp-room at Oxbridge once, and the biggest beetle took the most sugar. Then the big beetle took too much sugar apparently, and got unwell, and the rest sat on him like a committee of a charitable society, and finally just quietly killed him and went for the sugar with renewed ardour. That's rather suggestive conduct, I think—rather resembling the human style, don't you?'

'But human people don't kill each other

for the sake of gain, though they are pretty bad, all the same.'

'Don't they? You will think differently of people in general when you have known them a little longer.'

'Don't you like your fellow-creatures?'

'One or two of them—sometimes a great deal too much. The general multitude, strictly regarded *as* fellow-creatures, and in their official capacity as such, I don't care a halfpenny about. I may hate, or respect, or admire, or despise them for some particular thing they do or say, but I don't see that the mere fact of being fellow-creatures, whatever that may mean, gives them any claim on me whatever.'

'Wouldn't you save a man from drowning then?'

'Depends on who he was. It might be highly beneficial to some one that he should be drowned, and to nobody that he should be saved. I have known people the sight

of whose corpses would cause in me distinct and, in my opinion, justifiable rejoicing.'

'You are making yourself out a terrific character, Mr. Laurence. But wouldn't you save a person you knew nothing about except that he was your fellow-creature?'

'I probably would make an effort, if it wasn't very muddy, out of some silly instinct or other. Besides, it would put me in practice for saving really valuable people. Why I shouldn't leave him to drown I don't know. The chances are he would be neither a very useful nor a very happy unit of the community. What the sitting magistrate and the penny press would say of my "heartless conduct" would be rather amusing. I think I should intercept suicides on principle. They arouse some respect and interest in me. At any rate, I should like to know why they wanted to

do it. If their reasons seemed to me satisfactory, I should say, "Well, you can go on getting over that parapet as far as I'm concerned, but chloral's better." Do you think murder and suicide never justifiable ?'

'No, never, of course not.'

'Ah well ! It's like your amiable disposition to think so. Now, I'll tell you a little story—a true story, to be regarded as a case in point. A man once loved a girl. She loved him ; but after a time, of course, she changed her mind, and loved some one else. The man did not blame her. He knew she could no more help changing than he could help loving her all the same, and he told her he would be her friend, and her lover's friend to the best in his power, if he was allowed. He also was very friendly and jovial with the new lover who was taking his place, and never gave vent to a single sneer or disagreeable

remark—in fact, he was studiously and elaborately amiable as a point of duty, though he had not habitually laid himself out to please—contrariwise. Then everyone said to everyone else, "He couldn't care much, he took it very easily." They all said to each other, in fact, the sort of things people *do* say to each other, who have no very great penetration, and no large radius of emotional experience, which description includes the majority of the race. You or I would have said the same. However, as story-teller, of course I know what passed in everyone's mind, and tell you that my friend's cheerfulness was exaggerated and assumed, though the spectators couldn't see that, from a variety of motives. First of all, instinctive courage, which wishes to make the best of a bad job, or, as your English proverb says, to grin and bear it; secondly, a fancied sense of duty not to spoil the fun where

everyone appeared to be enjoying themselves. What was worse than anything, was that he did not exactly and thoroughly believe in this new lover. He had no facts to go upon, and his mere instinctive fanciful suspicion would have been put down to jealousy. He knew this, and his mouth was sealed. The two people were married, and my friend wandered about the world like Teufelsdröckh. The husband turned out a brute, with whom it was impossible for this young girl to live, from whom it was impossible to get a separation. My friend formed in his mind the project of simply murdering the husband by the most convenient means, and, if he was arrested, letting himself be tried under a different name, so that she might never know it. Then, if he were hanged, as he infallibly would be, he said to me: "After all, there's some consolation in the old saying: 'greater love hath no man than

this, that he should lay down his life for his friend.'" I told him he was a perfect fool, which rather staggered him for a moment, and then he said, "Why ?"'

'And what did you tell him ?'

'What would you have told him ?'

'That it can never be right to do wrong.'

'But that is begging the question, which is, would it under the circumstances be wrong ?'

'What *did* you tell him ?'

'I told him that the one person he desired to benefit would be the greatest sufferer, and that he would perpetrate an act of heroic tomfoolery. He had to agree with me.'

And Laurence's rather sad eyes wandered to the far-off west, and rested there, in seeming search for something. Hel had a faint conjecture in her mind as to how much Laurence personally might have been

involved in his own story, but asked no question. Then the old Professor sauntered up to them, and said:

'Hel, have you any idea where that reprobate young brother of yours is?'

'Not the least. He went to the post.'

'Oh, aye, that's generally done under a quarter of an hour. However, he knows his own way home. When I was his age, Laurence, I used to go to the post and take two hours and a quarter to do two miles. I used to do all sorts of things—in the experimental line. Suffering for it now though. Experience must be bought: can't be had gratis, and can't be had second-hand. Pity we are not more grateful when we have it, plus age, infirmity, and a family.'

'I don't see that anything has a claim on our gratitude, sir,' replied Max; 'we owe most of our sorrow to externals be-

yond our control, which we may collectively call the Fates.'

'Or "the circumstances,"' put in Professor Miller, 'might invent names for the Three Circumstances, beyond all possible control. Mustn't, Can't, and Don't-want-to, would be three nice names; put the last in the middle, as it's the longest—Mustn't, Don't-want-to, and Can't, the three restraining circumstances, of which the two latter are the only ones that have any power over most people worth anything.'

'I was going to say, sir,' continued Max, laughing, 'that they give us our sorrow, and our pleasure we get by our own exertions, if we get it at all, and need be grateful to no one.'

'But then there is the gratifying fact always,' replied the Professor, 'that there are other people who enjoy life far less than we do. For instance, I know that I

am rather a feeble old person, as far as my alimentary canal is concerned, but I rejoice in the fact that I can smoke, and that I can cut a tree down if I want to—I never do want to—when I see some other old beggar towed past me in a bath-chair, while I am doing the fastest limp on record on the Winterdale Roman Road.'

'How horribly selfish, papa! that is, if you really meant a word you said.'

'Selfish? Of course it is! But then I *am* selfish: what accomplished young moderns like you, Laurence, would call an egotistic Hedonist. We are all selfish; some people pleasantly, and most people unpleasantly so. Try an omnibus on a rainy day. Again, what can be more selfish than to endeavour to shape one's life, and select one's society, solely with a view to one's future comfort in this world or another? Mr. Exeter's form of selfishness may be more beautifully and poetic-

ally conceived than mine' ('No, no!' from Laurence, in his best Union voice), 'and more picturesquely inserted into the parochial mind, but it is none the less the common egoism of our hedgerows, not exactly as it occurs wild in nature, but forced and cultivated, decorated, and hot-water-piped—egoism festooned with glowing language, and irrigated freely with vague but gorgeous metaphor. Selah!' And the Professor pulled at his pipe, and was for the next five minutes what Carlyle calls 'for the most part silent.'

'It is getting very dusky and chilly,' said Max, after a pause, 'the sunset is gone, quite gone, and there are two stars visible. When the stars come out it is time for ladies in evening dress to come in. Don't you think so, Herr Professor?'

'Oh, by all means. Let us take coffee, and Hel shall play to us—"In sweet music is such art," etc.—though I don't think we

have any of us much care or grief of heart to kill. I say, Laurence,' said the Professor quietly, as they followed Hel in at the French window that opened on to the terrace, 'what is Jack after?'

'He has discovered a New World, sir, I believe,' replied Max, with a sly smile.

'*À la* Columbus? Ah! Very nice, I dare say! I guessed as much. Of course, old fellows like me have no eyes. You boys, in your storm-and-stress period, think, of course, no one in the years gone by ever yet knew rightly, like you, how to enjoy Lied, Liebe, und Wein.'

'On the contrary, I believe it was one of the first necessities of life discovered by quaternary man.'

'When—

> '"He lived in the long long agoes
> And dined upon oysters—and foes,"

Eh? I say, Laurence, I give you credit for

some glimmerings of sense beyond the average every-day young 'Varsity man——'

'Thank you, sir.'

'And I wish you would just pitch into Jack now and then, when he wants it. You see, I'm not another young man, and can't quite do it the same way. Besides, fathers never know the exact nature and necessities of the case, as a young fellow's own friends do. What is mere friendly badinage from you, would take the less digestible and acceptable form of mere paternal advice from me.'

'I know what you mean—I always do my best, up to my lights, with Jack Miller, but he is one of those men who insist on being sole driver of their own engine, and will only take their friends as passengers. If he wants to do a thing, he will do it, and if you put the Pelion of impossibility before him with the Ossa of imprudence

on the top of it, he will either leap them or tunnel them, and chance their breaking down on him. It's a feature of his character I rather admire.'

'Hang it, my young friend, so do I! Just the way I always behaved myself. But at the same time I was open to reasonable suggestions.'

'Jack has plenty of reasonable suggestions of his own, and usually considers them superior to other people's—and they often are.'

'I say, you two are great friends, aren't you?'

'We are.'

'Glad of it. *Noscitur a sociis* — I always like to know what friends my son has, though I don't seek to pry into his private affairs. If a young fellow has the faculty of selecting good friends, he'll do. Well, you will try and prevent his doing any folly with this girl of seventeen, eh?

As much for her sake as for his! Thanks. Come and have some coffee. No good talking to ladies about things of this kind.'

And Hel soothed the whole group with the strains of 'Tannhaüser,' which set Max dreaming, made Mrs. Miller drop her knitting to listen, and set the Professor striding up and down the room in a long irregular quarter-deck style. At the close of the performance he said:

'Can anyone tell me who are the people that take an interest in the periodic pictures in the *Illustrated News* of the New Orphanage at Hull or Bristol, and the New Atlantic clipper *Sophia Jane* of Birkenhead? You all give it up? So do I; then let us retire.'

The ladies 'retired.'

'Come and have a smoke in my den, Laurence,' said the Professor.

Laurence knew that this was a high compliment, and obeyed, and his mind quickly

became a queer mixture of Elasmo-branch fishes, island life, German tobacco, germs, reminiscences of ambrosial nights beyond the Tweed, and stories of gay and grand old academic Edinburgh, with a misty vision floating above them all on the tobacco smoke and whisky fumes of a young lady with rippling fair hair and blue eyes, who was putting to him the self-provoked conundrum: Why are beetles like humanity? And the clock kept ticking to him *Why-are ! beetles ! like-hu ! manity !* And then Jack came home radiant and talkative, and received a little chaff as to his occupations of the evening, and the distance to the post-office, to which he deigned no response.

CHAPTER VII.

'Glad is the ground of the tender floris grene,
Birdis the bewis and thir schawis schene.
The wery hunter to fynd his happy pray,
The falconer the riche riveir our to fleue,
The clerk rejosis his buikis our to seyne,
The luiffar to behold his lady gay
Young folk thaim schurtis, with gam, solace, and play.'
Douglas, *Spring—Æneid Translation* (prologue), 1513.

Gawain Douglas, amid the stern and sanguinary realities of Scotch religious and political life of the fifteenth and sixteenth century, contrived to find time to observe, and probably to experience, the peculiar influence of spring and commencing summer on the soul of man, particularly on that portion of the human race which is of an

age to receive impressions most readily. The effects of the spring are as conspicuous in the nineteenth as in the sixteenth century, and the month of May has much to be responsible for besides sore throats and colds. An ordinary English May is rather worse, as a rule, in its meteorological manifestations than an ordinary January, and commits ravages on the too lightly clad human frame in proportion; but the May which Rosa spent at Winterdale was of a very different kind, being continuously warm and mild, with blue skies and calm sunsets, and nightingales, and moonlight. Such a one, indeed, as to unsettle the growing English conviction that the 'Merrie Month of May' was a delusion or a fraud on the part of our alliterative ancestors.

It made Jack lazy and sentimental, and prone to sketch sunsets over Winterdale, and to read Alfred de Musset and Heine. Sketching journeys about the country were

the most arduous works he ever undertook, generally at the behest of his imperious little new friend, who would try to sketch too, and get impatient because the materials did not produce the same effect in her hands as in his, and give it up in despair, and take to destroying and devouring grass, and making remarks intermittently.

At first Jack had feebly remonstrated on the score of propriety and public opinion at their going out together, and had suggested that Hel might come.

Rosa had said :

'If you don't mind my coming, I don't care two straws about what people say. I am known as "that girl" already, most likely, because I bought two ounces of tobacco in a shop.'

So Jack very naturally gave in, and spent a good many pleasant afternoons in the company of Rosa, a portable easel, and a case of colours ; wandered about the neigh-

bourhood searching for 'things to draw,' as Rosa called them, and did not enjoy himself less from the consciousness that they were making each other rather conspicuous, and that people of the Radford calibre spoke of them with the demonstrative 'that' before the name of each.

It is not perhaps maintainable by argument that they were particularly wise in these proceedings. But no one imputes superfluous prudence or foresight to either of them. Their conduct was not criminal, except in the eye of respectable Winterdale, and by no means unnatural. Of course, it was said that Mrs. Frankland ought to know better than to let her. But no one knew the exact relations between Rosa and Mrs. Frankland, and, since the latter appeared invariably civil and ladylike in her behaviour, and habitually gave luxurious lunches and dinners and afternoon teas in her pretty abode, Winterdale

concluded to tolerate the eccentricities and easy-going coolness of the girl on account of her *distinguée* and affluent guardian. They said Rosa 'had been brought up abroad, you know; and, besides, they are not half so particular in America. Girls go with young men out driving, or to the theatres, and no one thinks anything of it.'

Of course, Mrs. Frankland's real redeeming quality was that she was rich, though not so much so as the club at Winterdale—a circle rejoicing to toy conversationally with large 'round' sums of money—made her out. The explanations of the relationship between Mrs. Frankland and Rosa, furnished by this intelligent body—the club—were both original and interesting. Rosa's father (naturally), a former and still existent husband of Mrs. Frankland, developed from a Californian bar-keeper (whom one of the members knew in-

timately, and stated his name to be McGuckin) to an Emperor of Brazil, through the intermittent stages of the Spanish Consul at New Orleans and a few other people. Whoever it was, gave her fifty thousand a year to keep in Europe and take care of the girl. This was what was said by what Jack called the 'old men's chorus.'

The women of Winterdale did not take such bold flights, but were more vindictively minute in details. They detected all the little unconventionalities and innocent freedoms of Rosa's conversation, they lifted their brows at the unnecessarily straightforward announcements of opinion she sometimes gave, and wondered how and where she had been brought up. They permitted themselves to be exasperated at the calm and unconscious manner in which she persisted in following such courses as seemed to her agreeable,

irrespective of their opinions, and came to the conclusion that 'some one really ought to speak to her;' some added, 'poor thing.' But though all acknowledged the necessity, none acknowledged the personal duty of 'speaking' to her.

At last Mrs. Radford, always in the van when a good work was to be done, undertook the painful duty. She took the opportunity, one day when Rosa was passing by her gate with a note from Mrs. Frankland to accept the pleasure of meeting the Bishop and his wife at a garden-party, to ask her in. Rosa, unsuspecting but surprised, entered, was called 'dear,' and invited to remove her out-door teguments, which seemed symptomatic of an interview of some duration. Rosa did not, however, take anything off, and sat, not knowing exactly what to say, and waiting for enlightenment.

Mrs. Radford plunged without hesitation, diplomacy or remorse, into her subject:

'It has long distressed me, dear, to see the way you have been going about—alone with young Mr. Miller.'

'Has it?' was the calm response.

'It is no fault of yours; you are but a child, and have not been brought up perhaps to the ways of society here. But you know you ought not to be in the company of a man, almost a stranger to you, without a chaperone, a female older than either of you, or a married lady.'

'Why not?'

'Because it is a breach of good-breeding and of public decency, and makes people make remarks.'

'Well?' Same exasperating indifference of tone.

'*Well!* Isn't that enough? Isn't what I have said a sufficient hint? I only speak for your good.'

'You are very kind.'

'I am older than you, you know.'

'Certainly.'

'Don't keep interrupting, child. Wait till I've done'—with some asperity; 'and I have thought fit to ask you in here to give you a little quiet friendly advice, which I trust you will have the sense to act on.' (Rosa merely laughed at the pompous solemnity of Mrs. Radford's discourse.) 'Now it appears to me that your bringing-up has been in certain respects deficient. Have you ever learnt your Catechism?'

'My what?'

'Good gracious! don't you know what it is?'

'Not exactly.'

Rosa knew perfectly well, but it amused her to try the effect of assumed ignorance and sullenness.

'It is a series of questions on belief and conduct.'

'Such as you are giving me?'

'Yes,' said Mrs. Radford, not perceiving the impertinence, 'with full answers, which I cannot say is what you are giving me. But how can you have been educated? Do you read your Bible?'

'I don't possess one. I know what you are going to say, Mrs. Radford, "Will I accept this?" with a text on the blank page. I have had one or two like that before; but I left them in Paris. You see, books are so heavy, and you have to pay for your luggage by weight in France; but I assure you, Mrs. Frankland has one which I can always borrow.'

'Oh, well! I *did* think of giving you one; however, I will wait till you are in a more fit state to receive it.'

'I can't say that I take much interest in the sayings and doings of a whole crowd of stupid people who lived ever so long ago, and didn't know what a joke meant.'

'That is simply profane. However, we will speak of that another time. Now, I am sorry to say it—it is no pleasure to me, and I do it as a duty—but I think Mr. Miller is scarcely a fit companion for you, or for any young girl: he is known to be very odd in his habits and tastes, and frequents the society of all sorts of strange people, and is scarcely ever at church, and, generally, not likely to do you any good. Quite different, I am thankful to say, from my Arthur, who never was led into these strange ways and ideas, which I cannot understand and do not wish to investigate, but which I know must be bad, from their utter divergence from all known truth; and the sort of society which painting and medicine and that kind of thing bring a young man into, must tend to corrupt both morals and religion.'

This roused Rosa's rather passionate temper, and she said:

'You are at liberty to say what you like to me and about me, Mrs. Radford, although I must say it is no business of yours; but I won't hear you talk like that of a friend of mine who is not here to defend himself, though he would only laugh, most likely, if he heard what you say. You are right; he *is* odd, and different from your Arthur, who is a perfect fool, or anyone else here, and that is why I like to associate with him; and I shall go on associating with him as much as I like, and you and your friends may say what you please.'

Here Rosa got up to go. Mrs. Radford stared aghast at this utter want of manners or reverence for elders and betters, which appeared to distinguish Young America, and then said:

'I see, it's no use speaking to you. I trust you will have the sense not to repeat

this interview, which was of course in strict confidence.'

'I didn't know that it was in any sort of confidence; I never should dream of saying anything in confidence to you. I shall do as I like about telling about it; and I suppose you will, too.'

Here Rosa walked out, leaving all the doors open, and went and posted her note with the conscience of a valorous and virtuous, if not of a prudent action. It is never prudent to raise up enemies, but there is often an irresistible temptation to do so. This little piece of defiance cost Rosa a good deal. Still, in spite of such incidents as these, Rosa and Jack continued to take lengthy and tortuous constitutionals, usually about the time of sunset, and remarked that every walk they had considered likely to be lonely and unfrequented seemed infested with agricultural labourers returning, basket-laden, to their homes, and all

having a tendency to remark gruffly, 'Fine evening!'

It is odd that neither Jack's parents nor Mrs. Frankland appeared to have any cognisance of what was going on under their very noses, as it were. It was natural enough that Jack and Rosa should enjoy one another's society, and more so since each had been prepossessed in the other's favour by the fact that each had heard the other well abused.

And after the spring came the summer, the time when the year comes of age, and when sentiment grows into passion, and roses grow in place of mild spring flowers.

CHAPTER VIII.

'Es blasen die blauen Husaren
Und reiten zum Thor herein,
Und Morgen wird mich verlassen
Die Herz allerliebste mein.'

'You must try and invent something for me to wear, as you are an artist, and as you choose to make fun of everything I suggest.'

The speaker was a young lady in black, looking provokingly cool, lazy, and dictatorial, as she lay stretched in a hammock slung under two green oak trees, shaded enough thereby to defy the heat of a July afternoon.

This was Rosa, motionless and languid

in body, active in mind, seductive in expression, placid in temper, with a touch of sentimentality that grew as the long day declined. She was discussing with Jack (on the grass, pipe in mouth, sketching materials well out of reach) what to wear in order to bewilder and take the shine out of Winterdale, at a forthcoming fancy ball to be holden at the Town Hall, an annual occurrence.

Jack said something new must be devised, in order that she might not merely swell the crowd of already exhausted historic characters and Normandy peasants and flower-girls that make every ball-room ridiculous and commonplace. Jack, moreover, took upon himself to invent a dress to answer this purpose, admitting the largeness of the responsibility, but feeling it small compared to the pleasure of having Rosa voluntarily submit herself to the control of his taste.

'I will think it over,' he said. 'How hot it is!'

'Take an orange.'

'Can't, my dear fellow. I'm smoking. Sitting still is the only thing, and waiting for the sunset. The time will go quickly enough. Let us spend it in building castles in Spain.'

'You begin.'

'I should like an eternal summer evening, just at sunset time, you know, or a quarter of an hour after, very still, not so cool but what one could lie in long grass and watch the bats above one. A star or two visible somewhere, between the branches of trees, an occasional puff of breeze, bringing the sound of music with it—music not too mirthful, suited to the sadness sunset never fails to bring. A nightingale would make such music better than any human instrument. That is the *mise en scène* of my castle in Spain.

Then, in order to thoroughly enjoy it, I should require a capacity for forgetting a great many things, which I now am obliged to remember—debts and duties, for example—and I should like a glass of cold beer, eternally full, and a pipe eternally burning.'

'There the student comes out in you. Is that all?'

'No. I can't imagine it now complete without a hammock containing a charming, but rather silent and sphinx-like human being, of the opposite sex, supplied freely with cigarettes and oranges.'

'I'm not like a sphinx!'

'Indeed? That is a matter of opinion. But who said you were?'

Temporary and eloquent silence. Then from Jack:

'Let's hear the description of your castle in Spain.'

Rosa looked dreamily out of her brown

eyes towards the west, where the sun was beginning to descend, and said in a low voice:

'I should like to be in some place by the sea, where there was nobody but you and I, and where we could sail out by ourselves straight towards the sunset, and dip our hands in the water where it was gold and pink and crimson, and go on and on always—until it got dark.'

'And then?'

'And then we could sink or anything.'

'Or come home to tea. Exactly.'

'I don't care about the end—I hate the end of everything. I hate having to come to the end of a story. You are never happy till you get to the end, and then you wish you hadn't. I suppose we should get tired of such castles in Spain.'

'Where, strange to say, we have neither of us thought of inserting the trifling ingredient of a castle. I fancy you would

tire sooner than I should of such lives as we are describing. What do you think?'

'I don't know. One tires of everything. I tire of my clothes long before they are really shabby—I don't care twopence for kittens when they grow up, though I like them to play with when they are small and pretty. I sometimes think it possible to get tired of life, and yet I should not like to have to die before I'd had a good time.'

'We are both tolerably united on the question of life, and what is to be done with it, I think. Live it as jolly as you can, and don't ask questions. Kill Time, forgetting that he will kill you. I think we should do very well in a joint-stock castle in Spain. We look at things very much from the same point of view.'

'I know we are both awfully lazy; but you are not a bit like me in some things—

how you try not to hurt people's feelings, or rub them the wrong way! and you are kind to animals and children. I hate children, and like to torture animals that are not big enough to torture me, and enjoy speaking my mind, especially when I annoy a lot of people by so doing. I get in fearful rages and sulks every now and then—you take everything calmly.'

'That is merely my laziness, I fancy. It is merely done with a view to making things pleasanter for one's self. You have no idea how much annoyance one loses by taking things calmly—always grin and bear it—even if you can't bear it, try and grin, and you will find you can bear it.'

Another long and eloquent pause. The sky became a sort of hazy sandy red in the west, and a coppery dull red in the east. A storm was apparently to be expected. It was as yet bright, warm, and still.

Jack felt one of Rosa's hands fall caressingly on his shoulder, sending a wild shudder of delight through his body. She said :

'I wish you weren't going away, Jack.'

He said :

'I hate the idea of leaving you here, alone with the Philistines.'

'Especially when I've taken so much trouble to offend them in different ways. Oh ! I shall go along my own way to the devil, and you will go yours, I suppose.'

'I wish you had not such an air of meaning what you say, there. I don't know what I should have done here all the summer without you.'

'More work.'

'Perhaps. Dash the work ! I don't think I ever told anybody so much of my life and my thoughts as I have you. Very selfish of me to bore you with such things.'

'I like to hear them.'

'Really?'

'Really. Do I ever say things for politeness' sake?'

'Well—no. I admit you don't. You have a certain manly frankness which few girls have. You will make worse enemies and better friends by it than by any other quality.'

'It's going to thunder, I think. I saw a flash. Do you remember the thunder-storm the first night I knew you?'

'Rather. I hope it won't rain yet. I have so many things to say out here, Rosa, that I can't remember them.'

Jack was still lying on the ground close to the hammock, with one of Rosa's hands on his shoulder. All sorts of wild words were whirling in his head, but could not find themselves articulation. All that he did succeed in saying was the original and eloquent speech:

'Haven't much more time left here.'

'How long will it be before you go?'

'Month.'

'Some time yet. Don't talk about saying good-bye till you are obliged.'

'I wish I didn't have to think and dream about it.'

Pause. Silence in fools' paradise for the space of half a minute. Jack's right arm inserted itself round the neck and shoulder in the hammock, and two human figures might have been seen in a rather ridiculous, but no doubt extremely delightful, juxtaposition and enlacement, both gazing pensively at the sky. After a while the female element in this group observed:

'What a bright flash! Aren't we rather likely to be struck, under these trees?'

'Don't much care if we are—now.'

'It would be rather grand, wouldn't it?

Go and see what that noise on the road is—sounds like a lot of horses.'

Jack went and looked over the hedge, and came back, explaining:

'It is the —th Hussars coming into Winterdale. I forgot that they would have to pass here, or I would have told you before.'

Rosa emerged from her chrysalis and came to the hedge.

The last light of the day was glancing redly on the sabres and dust of the foremost troop. Behind them were the thunderclouds. Before them Winterdale, bright, still, and hazy. It was a picturesque sight to see—horses, gold lace, feathers, accoutrements clashing and glittering together as they trotted by. More than one face looked out of its rigid 'eyes front,' at the pale beauty gazing steadfastly and unabashed at them over the yew hedge, and scanning minutely the anatomy of horse and man.

Rosa was fond of horses, and took a sensuous delight in the contemplation of well-formed men and their limbs. She would have gone to a gladiatorial exhibition with the greatest delight. She asked wondering questions, and made laudatory remarks, concerning these light horsemen jingling past her, and was much more interested in them than Jack thought altogether necessary.

The last of the long line to pass saluted and smiled. He was an officer, a small man with neat features, and a streak of dark down on his upper lip; a rather pallid face, flushed with the day's march.

'By Jove!' observed Jack, 'it's my cousin. Do you know him?'

'Alfred de Tortoleone? Why, certainly. Come in now and have some tea.'

It thundered heavily now, and large drops began to fall. A bugle was audible some little distance off.

CHAPTER IX.

'—Din of instruments and shuffling feet,
And glancing forms and tapers glittering,
And unaimed prattle flying up and down;
Spirits upon the stretch, and here and there
Slight shocks of young love-liking interspersed,
Whose transient pleasure mounted to the head,
And tingled through the veins.'

WORDSWORTH.

LAURENCE, who had been invited especially on account of the fancy ball, was leaning out of Jack's studio window, gazing into the night, while Jack was inserting himself gradually into the 'customary suit of solemn black' of the Prince of Denmark, relieved by dashes of uncustomary orange, which, for some unknown reason, is a

legitimate mourning colour. His now rather long fair hair, and thin but comely face and watchful eyes, furnished him with a natural 'make-up.' His costume he had devised himself—there was nothing startling or unusual about it. He wore no hearse-suggesting head-dress, or, indeed, any head-dress at all.

Max, in the muffin-cap, scarf, sword, gauntlets, braided velvet jacket, white breeches and boots of a Viennese student in festal array, was a striking figure; and the dress being one he had worn as common practice on many occasions, gave him no feeling or appearance of awkwardness or novelty. It was no more to him than the uniform to a soldier, though it was, of course, new and original to Winterdale. If a large pipe and unlimited beer had been allowed him, his happiness would have been complete.

The cathedral clock, ringing nine, was

audible through the still summer twilight.

Max turned round, and said :

'Quite too early to go yet. We must come in late, and make a sensation. Let us do a pipe, and discourse.'

'Right you are. That's where the hideous, undramatic incongruity of fancy dress comes in—fancy Hamlet smoking a clay like this !'

'Fancy Hamlet gulping down a pint of Guinness behind the scenes.'

'Yes, but that *is* behind the scenes.'

'Well, regard this as behind the scenes, and smoke away. What is the latest news of the *affaire* Rosa ? What sort of footing have you arrived at by now ? When I left, you were in the artistic-expedition stage. I suppose you have got tired of that, and indulge in co-operative caresses in the nearest shady retreat, grove or garden ?'

('Damn your acuteness,' thought Jack.)

'I don't know about her. I know I'm in a very strange state, that I don't remember feeling myself in before, with any other girl I've been concerned with.'

'Ha! you have planted both feet in it this time, as I foresaw.'

'What in sin do you mean?'

'Oh, you will find out in such time as the Fates shall decree—what I mean, what you mean, and—what she means. You are evidently not in a condition to listen to cold-blooded advice just at present.'

'I say, you are perhaps the only fellow I should ever make a confessor of in these affairs, and that only partially; but inasmuch as you have a sympathetic soul, and have been there yourself, more or less, I conjure you to tell me what is going to happen. I confess that I cannot understand Rosa. I don't know what to believe about her. I sometimes think she would

treat me as she does cats and caterpillars and flies, which is with a Neronian and remorseless cruelty, and then again she seems full of a dreamy, strange gentleness. She always insists on my company at all sorts of times and places, and sometimes says all kinds of wild and original things about life and art and nature, and sometimes is quite silent and almost sullen. Does she—can she care for me, or anyone? In any other case, judging by words, looks, and behaviour, I should say she was fond of me; but she is *sui generis*, and not to be judged by ordinary standards.'

'Hum! You are pretty far gone, anyhow, whatever she may be. I will tell you an anecdote—a case in point. Years ago, at Vienna, when I habitually wore such things as I have on now, I knew a girl from Bucharest—at least, she was born there and spoke its language. What nationalities may have contributed to her

descent I know not. In appearance she was feline, serpentine—"pâle comme un beau soir d'automne," with dull black curly hair full of strange and intoxicating odours——'

'By Jove! you're going it in the description.'

'Don't interrupt. It is for a serious lesson—it is to "point a moral," that I adorn a tale. In person she was lithe, strong—what the Germans call "schlank" —capable of much languorous, dependent clinging, and containing a whole volcano of infinite passionate capacities. She was only eighteen, and her name was Yolanka, which leads me to suspect a dash of the Magyar in her. She was born of poor but dishonest parents, who played games of chance and absorbed strong drinks when not employing their time in doing or devising more felonious things. They let Yolanka grow up as circumstances might

permit. Circumstances permitted her to come to Vienna when I was there, a youth with a head crammed with ideas and aspirations, and empty of experiences. Aware of this lack, I thought I would obtain one—an experience, I mean—and I did. I happened, of all the thousands of young men there, to be the first one whom Fate brought to her acquaintance. How, does not matter. We laughed and sang and drank and danced and loved together. She evidently regarded all men, me among the rest, as playthings provided for her by a munificent Providence, and as convenient sources of bon-bons and cigars. I might have seen all this at the time, but I was irresistibly driven on by her wonderful beauty and alluring ways. I succeeded in provoking in her whatever it is that fills the place of love in creatures of that kind, and, by Hades! it was a temptation worth giving in to, if torture and remorse

and regret, with fire and furies to back them, were to be the consequence! She had strange wild ways of manifesting passion. It was rather like being loved by some beautiful and dangerous beast, whose caress might turn into a clutch, and whose kiss left blood on your lips. This was naturally not calculated to last—as your proverb says, the pace was too good. It lasted some months, during which I led a life such as I shall never forget, such as mediæval saints would sell their souls for to any fiend who was fool enough to buy. Having got tired of me, and found some other fool with a different face and, no doubt, equally desirable person, to bestow his affection on her, she caressingly informed me of the fact, and asked if I minded. Of course, she meant it kindly. Of course, it would be absurd to blame her —or indeed anyone but my own rather insane self. But not being able to blame

anyone but one's self is seldom consolatory. I went out of her presence into the dark streets towering up above my head, and seeming to frown and stagger and grimace at me from their many windows and balconies. Through the narrow breadth between them I saw the stars. Then something fell at my feet; it was a large yellow rose. Her voice at her window said, "Good-night, Ramsch!" (my *kneipe* nickname). Some man's voice laughed inside the open window. I went away, twirling the rose in my hand. I saw a clear running gutter. I threw that rose into it, and almost immediately ran and picked it out again. I put it in the pocket of this jacket I now wear, in my card-case. There it has lain ever since. It is seven years ago. I am twenty-seven now, nearly. I was twenty, nearly, then. Here is the rose, relic of my first serious romance. I never saw a girl like Yolanka

before, and I never have since till a few months ago, and then I saw her counterpart in a pew in St. Wotan's church, eating chocolate. The likeness is very striking in physique, colour, and expression. As you object to Solomon and Rochefoucauld, I will quote Villon, a melodious malefactor, who ought to be after your own heart: "Bien heureux est qui rien n'y a;" also, "Tu te brusles à la chandelle."'

'Thanks for the story. I hope the implied anticipation won't be verified. I am too far gone to retreat now, whatever be the consequence. Anyhow, it's nice while it lasts, if it don't last long.'

'That's what they all say while the path is strewn with passion-flowers and the sun shines, and then afterwards they rail on fate, or fortune, or the fair sex, on everything, in short, except their own folly, which is responsible for the disaster.'

'You are so comforting that I wish I

hadn't asked you here. Let's slope off to the dance. Just you mark Rosa's costume, and see if it doesn't strike rapture into your soul.'

'What is this costume that you have made such a dead secret of? Not Ophelia?'

'No fear. Oh, it's very "intense" and "utter" indeed. You'll see. Trot along. I'll put the light out.'

And Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, and a swaggering German Bursch strode down the road leading from Eave Lodge to Winterdale, to the intense amazement and horror of one or two aged villagers.

There was a report in a local paper shortly afterwards of this nature: 'A Strange Story. — The quiet hamlet of St. Wotan was thrown into excitement, last Friday, by the stated miraculous appearance of a dark and nameless gentleman, who we fancied would have been

regarded as a myth after several years of the elaborate educational system provided by a wise, liberal, and unsectarian Administration. But the conviction of Giles Barton and William Jones, who were returning home from the "Spotted Dog," appears to be deeply rooted, and could be destroyed neither by cross-examination nor argument. We can readily suppose that the excellent ale of the "Spotted Dog" is partially responsible for the occurrence. Where are the rural police?'—This by the way.

Of course, the usual crowd of loafers of all ages and sexes was gathered at the door of the Town Hall, making its witty observations on the strange figures that entered.

In the ballroom the mob of dancers was of the usual Colney Hatch appearance. The present writer feels that his pen is unequal to the minute description of a

fancy ball. Suffice to say that there were about ten 'Frosts' and 'Snows,' three 'Mary Stuarts' (all equally ugly), four 'Marguerites,' three 'Mephistopheles;' the officers of the —th Hussars in their brilliant uniform, the officers of the —th Light Infantry trying to look as if they did not feel 'cut out' in appearance by their brethren-in-arms of the light cavalry, and the veteran legion of the Winterdale Club, headed by General Radford, looking swollen and stiff in a uniform constructed apparently for a thinner man. He lingered in the refreshment department mostly, and his complexion and nose became rosier and bluer from hour to hour.

Arthur Radford, being of a thick-set and awkward figure, set it off by choosing to appear in the dress of a Spanish Picador, armed with a ribboned dart that embarrassed him considerably, and was continually being sat upon, owing to its being

laid aside on the nearest chair during each dance.

During the waltzes, Arthur ran diligently and perspiringly round his partner, and looked immensely relieved when they were over.

In one of those silent lucid intervals which sometimes occur, even at a ball, Hamlet and Herr Studiosus Philosophiæ Laurence entered, and the former looked hastily round the room, and remained with unsatisfied eyes. Rosa had not yet arrived. He leaned against the nearest wall with folded arms and waited. A young hussar came up and observed :

'Hallo, Miller, what the devil are you? Did you drive up in a hearse?'

'No, my fair cousin; though these are certainly the trappings and the suits of woe.'

'Oh, "Hamlet!" yes, of course. Had to get him up for my exam.; and beastly rot it was; never could make out why he

said peacock when he meant paiocke, and handsaw when he meant hernshaw—never could make out what paiockes and hernshaws were either. The brute nearly ploughed me. Awful good dance, as far as it has gone. Where's Rosa Taylor?'

'I don't know,' replied Jack rather sulkily.

Max had vanished. He soon reappeared with Hel on his arm, looking very pretty in a sacque dress of pale broidered silken colours, and her hair slightly sprinkled with silver dust.

'We are curious to see this dress of Jack's devising,' said she. 'Oh, how do you do, Mr. de Tortoleone?'

'I want to know,' said Max, 'if he has persuaded her to ochre her face and come as Cleopatra, or invested her with scales as the Mitgard snake.'

'How can you suggest such horrible things? She is a dear little girl.'

'Oh, certainly!' replied Max, with a certain dry readiness.

'Let me introduce you to my cousin: Mr. de Tortoleone—Mr. Laurence.'

They shook hands in the heavy hearty fashion of Englishmen who are introduced. Being both only partially English, it was doubly incumbent on them to be as English as possible in their demeanour.

'Might one ask your costume?' said De Tortoleone. 'Some foreign uniform?'

'Student of philosophy and the dead and living languages; place, Vienna; time, later nineteenth century, though you might not suppose so,' replied Jack for Max, who added:

'Yes; we stick to our old-world traditions and mediæval customs with a strange conservatism, wherever the German tongue is heard.'

'Oh, here she is!' said Hel. 'It really is very becoming. I'm glad you haven't

made her wear anything very out of the way.'

'As if I could "make" her wear anything!'

Rosa and Mrs. Frankland had just entered, the former in a close-fitting dress of black velvet, with the high white collar of the latter half of the sixteenth century, opening in a point in front, and nothing but her own rough hair on her head, allowed to curl itself into a low, copious, and natural mass on her forehead. Her shoulders were slightly puffed, and slashed with white silk. One large white rose was in her breast.

'What do you call it?' asked Hel.

'Oh, an arrangement in black and white, anything you please. My only idea was to find a pretty and becoming dress.'

'And, by Jove, you have succeeded!' said De Tortoleone. 'I never knew before how pretty she was. Thanks for showing

me, Miller, if it is you that invented the dress. The whole room is looking at her.'

So it was; and Rosa, perfectly unabashed, was looking at the whole room, with a cold imperturbable curiosity. Jack did not advance to meet her, or seem to betray any particular anxiety about her. Hel, Max, and De Tortoleone all went to speak to her, and congratulate her on her appearance. De Tortoleone asked for the next waltz.

'Engaged, thanks; have one by-and-by.'

Then she said something in an undertone to Max, which caused him to smile and reply:

'Oh, certainly; shall I find him?'

'Yes; tell him I want him.'

'Imperious young person!' muttered her messenger, as he walked away to Jack, many admiring eyes watching his still, handsome face, and the instinctive dash and Bursch swagger which he assumed,

almost unconsciously, in wearing the dress of his days of dash and duel.

'Well, what said she so confidentially?' asked Jack.

'So please you, something touching the Lord Hamlet, whom I am expected to fetch, carry, or convey to where she now stands, where, for reasons of her own, she would confer with him.'

Jack strode off, just in time to rescue Rosa from the united blandishments of General Radford and his ponderous offspring. Nodding affably to Arthur and the General, he led Rosa away towards the refreshment-room. She said:

'Do you think my dress really looks nice?'

'Not only I, but everyone thinks so. Half the women in the room have got up a healthy hatred for you already. It has the advantage of being charmingly simple——'

'And simply charming. Thanks. Not

original, though. Now, see here: I mean to have a real high old time to-night, and be very ill to-morrow, so I look to you to help me do it.'

'"For to-night we'll merry be," eh? to-morrow we'll be bilious?'

'Exactly. It will be the last dance you and I are likely to have, you know, before you go.'

'Oh, don't speak of it! The best preparation, I think, for our purpose, is to get rid of all melancholy suggestions by beginning with a small dose of champagne on an empty stomach—I regret to say it, but we do possess such organs as stomachs, unromantic as it may sound—then we'll wait till the music begins and wade in.'

The solemn hired head-waiter, who officiated at all entertainments given on a large scale in Winterdale, was slightly surprised at champagne being demanded so very early, but furnished it silently.

'Good-luck go with it!' said Jack, as he emptied his glass down his throat at a gulp. Rosa drank hers more leisurely. 'Have another?' asked Jack.

'Not now; mustn't hurry it. We'll come here off and on. Listen!' (The musicians in the ball-room began the 'Elfin-reigen' waltzes.) 'Come along, Jack.'

And they joined in the whirling stream. Max and Hel swung and glided placidly on, innocent of the artificial stimulus to enjoyment lent by MM. Mumm and Perier-Jouet.

'I wonder what is the matter with Jack?' said Hel; 'he has been a great deal out of doors, sketching and so on, all the summer; but he always seems restless when he is at home, and is in very different tempers on different days. Sometimes he takes quite a cheerful interest in anything we may be talking about, and

sometimes he bestows a sneer all round, and buries himself in his studio with a pipe and some book, generally poetry. I found one of his books lying open the other day, with a pipe in it for a marker. These were the first lines I saw—they remained on my mind :

> ' "Strange eyes, new limbs, can no man give her;
> Sweet is the sweet thing as it is.
> No soul she hath, we see, to outlive her ;
> Hath she for that no lips to kiss ?"

I did not read any more. I thought it all looked rather queer, and that I had better leave it alone. I asked him about it afterwards, and he " smiled a smile that was pensive and childlike," and said that little girls shouldn't be curious, which was simply rude.'

' Quite so,' replied Max, giving another specimen of the above-described smile ; ' I think he is in a condition not uncommon with young men of his age and tempera-

ment. I have met with many such cases in my limited practice. He is in love—a weakness still left to humanity, in spite of evolution, the telegraph, and the locomotive.'

'With Rosa? I knew you would say so. That's just what I think. Do you think she cares for him?'

'Just now, yes.'

'Don't you think she will go on caring for him?'

'I don't presume to judge such things with certainty, but——'

'But you think she won't?'

'I think he is playing with edged tools. I think the young lady is not of a kind to be constant. She cannot help it, nor perhaps now can he. We will hope for the best.' And they went off once more into the tireless dance. Jack and Rosa stopped breathless with their backs to the wall.

'What a mercy we took that cham-

pagne!' exclaimed he. 'I should have been in the most deadly depression all the evening, I believe, otherwise.'

'Why?'

'Why! Because I must. C'est plus fort que moi. I have had too much summer, too much sunset, too much starlight. I am made melancholy mad by the flower scents and the nightingale, and have read Heine and Musset far too freely.'

'What do you mean, Jack?' (As if she did not know.)

'I mean that to-night we dance together for the last time, to put it plainly.'

Rosa smiled a quiet little smile, and lifted up her eyes to his.

'Let us dance again,' *they* said, 'and get our money's worth while we can. We can talk like this after.'

And they sailed in again, and kept it up

till the dance ended, and sank panting on a friendly sofa in a passage.

'Look here,' said Jack, as he plied Rosa's black fan, the one necessary anachronism in her costume. 'Will you give me the last waltz you dance here?'

'Yes, Jack.' She consulted her programme. 'What does the name mean?'

'Let me see—oh, "Geliebt und Verloren"—that means "Loved and Lost." Why in the world need they have had that, I wonder, there? I didn't know.'

'Would you rather have the last but one?'

'And have you dance "Geliebt und Verloren" with some other fellow? No, thank you. I will have it, and hang the luck and the future.'

'Do you really care—— ?'

'Care—what?'

'About the—meaning of that waltz?'

'Care? Well—certainly. I am not

superstitious, as you may be aware, but I don't like it. It forebodes unpleasantly, but it is beautiful while it lasts, I am told. I don't know it, though.'

'Well we soon will. I don't know it either.'

'Our dance, I think, Miss Taylor!' said the voice of Alfred de Tortoleone. 'Been looking for you all over the place.'

Rosa got up, and laid her hand on his arm.

Max was telling Hel, during the next melody of the immortal Strauss, that he could shut his eyes and imagine himself deep in a German pine-forest, with the yellow moon showing through the trees, and the elf-king and queen and suite hunting along on small white steeds, all glittering in the yellow light, and playing wonderful music, that shaped itself somehow into the hackneyed but always enchanting—'An den schönen blauen Donau.'

'I was born within sight of the blue Danube,' he said; 'and when I was a little boy I used to wander about wildly by streams, and through woods, and up green mountain paths, as I would; so I have a wonderful attachment to them still. I used to sit in the old women's cottages, and listen to their strange stories of elves and fairies and nixes, kobolds, and all the dear old Gothic mythology, filtered into folk-lore. Happily, then, I knew nothing of philology, and did not torture my tales into types of Achilles and the Sunrise. I took them as real every-day or every-night facts, and looked about in the woods and caverns for elves and gnomes, and hoped to find beautiful and affable but dangerous nixes in the deep pools overhung with fern. I did not find my nix, though, till I was older.'

'Will you tell me about her?'

'I have told you—I have told the world

and the sea and the sky about her—in my book of songs.'

'Ah!'

Hel did not ask more questions. If it be possible to suppose such a thing of so well brought-up a girl as Hel Miller, one would think her slightly tinged with jealousy of the beautiful and perilous nix that haunted Laurence's songs.

'She is dead now,' said he. 'She is a ghost—my memory is full of ghosts of old days; they used to trouble me a good deal some time ago, when I was sitting by myself in lodgings in London, smoking a pipe by the evening firelight, and spinning verses. Now they have cleared away, and only remain as pleasant, though rather sad, misty reminiscences.'

'I should like to see those places you describe, and the old wives' cottages, and all that picturesque village life. They seem to keep their old costumes and

fashions so much more in Germany than we do. We have almost forgotten that there were fairies in England once.'

'They have been crushed out by the wheel of evolution and the wheel of the railway. But they remain in our minds, the bond of brotherhood between the two old Gothic nations—England and Germany. We have the idea of home, and the idea of fairies. The French, now, have no fairies, except polite modern ones, invented by clever old ladies in the last century, mostly stolen from us. As for our village life, it is more picturesque and old-world than it is sanitary. The children play on the mouths of drains, and grow up stalwart foresters and fair maidens, in spite of the warnings and prophecies of science to the contrary, and keep the stories heard on the doorstep in the summer evenings from the old grandmother in their heads. You should see a German family sitting at

their door, the mother knitting, the father leaning on the door-post, smoking his long pipe, and gazing at the sunset, the children grouped at his feet. It is a sight to make you feel that you could fight to the last drop of blood for the Fatherland. I have heard stories in that way, some of which the Brothers Grimm have no notion of. I hope you will visit those scenes some day. I wish we were there now. I could talk to you of these things so much better there, and forget all about England, and its smoke and tireless motion, and railways and machinery—forget everything except the one happy oasis of English country life I have been happy enough to find here.'

'I wish we were there now,' said Hel. 'I am afraid that you and Heine and Goethe have made me far less devoted to my "trivial rounds and common tasks" here. I have actually missed attending

Sunday-school several times lately to read German songs and stories.'

'Have you?' And Max laughed as he said, 'Do you remember our old compact, that you were to study these on condition that I went to church?'

'Yes. But I am afraid they have made more difference in me than church has in you.'

'Why afraid?'

'I feel in a queer mist as to all my old ideas. I can't understand who is right and who is wrong. The one seems so full of beautiful and attractive ideas of life, and yet the other must be right, I suppose, and yet they seem so opposed. I don't know quite what to think.'

'Let us come out into that cool-looking balcony, and look out of doors. . . . You see the black tower of the cathedral, you see the gas-lamps in lines: follow them with your eyes along there, to the left far

away. You see a few brilliant red points in the air? Yes? Well, those are railway signal-lamps. Now I will ask you a question. Do not answer it, think about it. Which is of more use to the world, the engine-driver who keeps sober for many hours in the week in order to interpret those red sparks rightly, and so protect every day some thousand of persons like you or me from death by mangling and torture, even though he never enters a church, and perhaps knows no greater joy than can be given on a half holiday by gin, and the perusal of the *Police News*—or the Sunday-school which tells stories that a rather small minority of the earth's population believe, to children, and gives them buns—or the preacher who is paid to tell similar stories without the buns to those of riper years? Now look up. There are the stars. What have they seen throughout all time?

They have seen bronze-looking figures in gangs dragging huge stones up to build marvellous and immense temples to gods whom we scarcely know, they are so lost in antique myth, but whose empty temples endure to tell the story of the dead great faith of dead great ages. For great faith must have built such temples. They have seen beautiful wild-looking young men and women, enwreathed with ivy and vine and myrtle, dancing and playing and rejoicing in the worship of the glad young god of wine, as well as grave gentle vestal nuns by their quiet everlasting flame--which was not everlasting. They have seen desperate determined men and women in the great and agonizing joy of giving themselves to fire, beast, slaughter and torture for a faith or an idea. The Indians call them fakirs, the Europeans, martyrs. They have seen a brave, coarsely-bred, direct, candid German monk

set half Europe in a blaze, defying cardinal, devil, and prince. And now they see a room full of foolishly dressed Christian human beings, disporting themselves strangely, and drinking champagne to the sound of a string band—people to whom Bassaridæ and Bacchanals would be the abomination of desolation, but people who copy their habits, and give the proceeds, when the expenses are paid, to a charity perhaps, and go home with the consciousness of a good action performed. Now, where are the faithful of Karnac and Luqsor, the worshippers of Cybele, Dionysus, or Vesta, the martyrs and reformers?—and lastly, where are the people who believed in all of them? "Mais où sont les neiges d'autan?" Do you suppose your faith and its manifestations are more eternal?'

Hel was rather bewildered and half frightened, half attracted by this long

speech, and said nothing, but continued to look at the stars.

The night wore on to morning. The ball-room floor became strewn with scraps of many colours, dropped from rending raiment. The spurs of the hussars had evidently done great execution. General Radford and his compeers had anchored themselves snugly in a small room to whist and brandy and soda—especially the latter. The chaperones looked weary and bored, and the young people a little ruffled and pallid, and not quite so active as earlier. The band began gently the introduction to 'Geliebt und Verloren.'

'We shall have the dawn on us, Rosa, before we have done.'

Jack and Rosa were starting for their last waltz.

'Never mind the dawn. Let us pretend it is still night.'

'If we could only get the band to

participate in the illusion. I say, we've had our money's worth of wine, I think.'

'I know you have. There is a queer expression in your eyes, and you are beginning to be rather stupid. I think you must be tired.'

'Are you tired?'

'No. But I shall be to-morrow. I shall get up about two in the afternoon, and have breakfast out in the garden. Will you come?'

'Rather. I say, hang dancing. You look as played-out as you can possibly be. Let us go out into the balcony and listen to the music and watch the dawn.' And they took the places just vacated by Hel and Laurence. 'Have you enjoyed yourself, Rosa?'

'Yes; more or less. Don't I look as if I had?'

'Not quite. You look a trifle melancholy. You should leave that to me. It suits my costume.'

'I am a little down. I suppose I'm tired, and I've had too much wine, and I'm sorry everything jolly has to finish so soon; and I'm sorry you've got to go away, Jack.' A sallow glimmer came in the east underneath a pale star.

'Wish you were going to Paris.'

'So do I. If I had lots of money of my own, I'd go like a shot, and import you.'

'There is no reason why, when I've accumulated lots of money by the force of my genius, I shouldn't import you there. But that is rather a problematic period to look forward to. What do you think?' (Rosa was silent. The eastern glimmer became redder and the star paler, and the roofs of houses became dimly visible, the gas-lamps began to look flamy and artifi-

cial.) 'But seriously, Rosa, when I have it in my power to invite you, will you come away with me to Europe—America —Africa? I don't care, say Paris?'

'I should love to go.'

And Jack felt her tired form leaning on his upright one, and the 'inky cloak' of his costume found its way round Rosa's shoulders as she gave a slight shiver. Rosa's eyes looked up at Jack with an inexplicable expression of dreamy longing, in which languor and tenderness seemed combined. The last notes of 'Geliebt und Verloren' were dying away. Jack was overcome by the situation, and could not help kissing Rosa fiercely and frequently. She did not resist; and the great yellow sun sent a cold ray in the eyes of them both.

'Come in, Rosa; it is time you went home.'

Jack took home a white rose, crumpled

in his pocket with his programme and handkerchief and gloves, humming—

'Cette fleur qui dans son cœur éclose,
C'est la gaieté.'

CHAPTER X.

'In the red rose land not a mile
Of the meadows from stile to stile,
Of the valleys from stream to stream,
But the air was a long sweet dream
And the earth was a wide sweet smile.'
The Year of the Rose.

THEN came the last hot month of the summer, the last four weeks Jack could spend before his departure; and it was such a month as neither he, nor perhaps Rosa, will ever forget. All the land lay dry in the sunlight, the corn was ripening to a deep tawny colour, the leaves were all green and untarnished by time, the sky was clear deep-blue from day to day, and

the air hot and motionless—the last best days of the departing August, whose dawns were misty and pale, whose sunsets were hot and red. All this had a new and unexampled glory for Jack, as it lay under the enchantment of his deep love for Rosa and her wild passion for him. After that supreme moment of delight in the balcony, when he found that she allowed and returned his impulsive and sudden embrace, he lost all regard for all things, and surrendered to her his happiness and freedom of soul, in 'rapture of royal enchantment and sorcery that set him not free.' Changing governments, falling or rising empires, were nothing to him. If the world should fall asunder he cared not, while he felt her clinging passionately to him and covering his eyelids and mouth with hot impetuous kisses. He felt often, especially in the long evenings, when the stars dawned and

the sky paled, that this was too good to be true, or if true, was too good to last.

'What makes you care for me?' said Rosa.

'I can't help it. Please accept this intimation.'

'I wonder how long it will last?'

'"Till all the seas gang dry," my dear, "and the rocks melt in the sun!"'

'Well, don't let's think how long it will last. If you or I get tired of it, we can't help it, I suppose; but we are not tired now.'

'And "now's the time": gather the roses while you may.'

'I've gathered you, for example, "Röslein auf der Heide!"'

All this, yea, much more than this, was the kind of conversation in which these two young persons indulged; and it is scarcely necessary to attempt to reproduce

it. Such conversation is always new and original and unexampled to the parties concerned, but less to the general public who are invited to take interest in those parties. The said parties also, as they live, find themselves driven to repetition, and that the flavour of a month's end has not the same piquancy as that of a month's beginning. Nevertheless, while the flavour *is* fresh and the style of talk *is* new, and the evening star is large and still and the nightingales fill the night with melody — which mixes strangely with waltzing music from some open window, and the scent of the rose and syringa combine in a girl's dark hair—one can be wonderfully happy. (Two, presumably, can be twice as happy.) Until the sickle is put to the harvest and a change comes to the green leaves of the trees, and days become windier and mistier, and the sun glides southwards at setting, and the rooks re-

place the note of the bird of Sappho, and rose-petals cover the grounds and rot or shrivel in pot-pourri vases, and golden, red, brown and crimson leaves form a floating floor in the pools and streams beneath the trees, and thick crisp carpet on the earth delightful to kick through (when no one is looking at one), and until, lastly, the July and rose season of the heart, as well as the year, fade into the October one.

But Jack had to leave for Paris before October, and did not stay to experience the possible influence of two months of autumn on one month of summer. He said good-bye to Rosa while there was yet a flame to leap up in her, a dim swimming longing look in her eyes, and while, in fact, those symptoms of nervous hysteria, peculiar to the constitution of such persons, were still capable of responding to stimulation. Rosa could just then eat very little, and

that little of an unsustaining kind. She drank wine freely, and smoked a good deal, took long and necessarily fatiguing country walks in which physical excitement prevented her feeling tired, and kept her from her normal and necessary sleep afterwards, and made her lie awake reading such books as de Musset's poems until daybreak. Such effect had Rosa's passion on her.

With Jack, the case was entirely different. He had a hearty, if not voracious appetite, even though he seemed thinner than usual, and his disposition was generally cheerful, and his tongue and wits worked above the average, and he cast Heine and all his sorrowful school of writers on one side (till they should be required, as he scarcely dared say to himself), and adhered to the fiery, frank and 'fleshly' school. He was affable to those he considered his inferiors, such as the Radford family or the vicar of his parish, and painted a good deal.

And then he started for Paris.

He took his seat in the train at Winterdale station with the heavy Oriental scents affected by Rosa clinging to his coat, the music of her voice ringing in his ears, and the knowledge that, come ill or well, he had had an experience that he never could forget, and wondered whether he was fortunate or not in possessing it.

Arthur Radford, balked by Rosa's frequent snubs to his advances (Rosa never hesitated about hurting people's feelings: if she did not care for the society of any particular person, she let him know it), was moody and strange for a while, and imagined himself the prey to silent and wasting despair. His mother easily guessed the reason, became more angry than ever with Rosa, and took the revenge in her power, of circulating such tales as she thought fit concerning that young lady. The General, in one of those flashes of intellect which he

occasionally displayed, said that Arthur was a d——d young fool, and that Rosa Taylor was a d——d pretty girl, and that it was a d——d shame to tell such stories about her. Mrs. Radford replied that she was sorry he thought it necessary to swear.

Arthur did not remain plunged in his gulf of dark despair long, but finding Rosa was not for him, and the daily arguments of his parents over nothing particular about as entertaining as his deadly enemy, Euclid, sought consolation where it was to be got, which, as may be anticipated, was at Miss Polly's bar.

A short time afterwards the Radfords were 'placed,' as the papers say, in a state of excitement and dismay to hear that Arthur, the type of duty and obedience and domestic virtue, as opposed to scepticism and vice in the person of Jack Miller, had contracted a matrimonial alliance with the said Polly, and that they proposed

keeping an inn—at least, that was the modest but profitable future their young minds had sketched.

Polly's father was a brewer, and meant to establish and endow them. This, of course, became the talk of the town, and was a sufficient Nemesis to Mrs. Radford for all her illustrated self-righteous inflictions in the form of conversation for the last few years. Every one said 'I always said so' behind her back, and 'I am so sorry' before her face—neither being, of course, true.

Professor Miller said, privately, that there ought to be an asylum for young people like that, and that one might include in it his parents, the London School Board, the Ritualist clergy, the supporters of the 'unfortunate nobleman now languishing in prison,' and the Irish nation at large, especially its Parliamentary representatives, and perhaps Thomas Cook and his excur-

sions. Thus the world would rid itself of a great many nuisances at one swoop.

Arthur and his spouse disappeared. We will hope they lived happy ever after, though it is not in the province of this story to inquire, as Arthur no longer influenced or encumbered the path of Rosa.

Alfred de Tortoleone was a rather good-looking young man, with no great capacities, no particular energy or courage, remarkably selfish and sensual, and yet rather pleasant withal. He was not stupid or irritable, like Arthur Radford, and was a far more interesting, though far more worthless, youth. He dressed, and drank, and danced, and did everything that was 'good form;' played billiards, drank brandy and soda, and sherry and bitters, when he did not want them, all as a matter of 'form.' Having plenty of money, he was tolerably popular, and able

to amuse himself pretty much as he pleased —and yet he was not particularly extravagant or intemperate. He betted a little, just so far as was good form; rode, of course, wore very good clothes and boots and gloves, eat hearty meals, and was quite satisfied with himself and his relations to the world. He had no particular 'views' or opinions on life—he did not 'go in' for them. He had no particular conscience, and very little sense of shame.

He was the sort of young man that would not hesitate to talk over the 'points' of ladies he intimately knew to his comrades in the billiard-room, or make jokes about them.

And he condescended to call at Mrs. Frankland's villa pretty frequently.

END OF VOL. II.

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